

The septic tank is a large holding and wastewater processing unit that is buried underground. Unless you've watched the installation process, you'll most likely only notice the tank by the exposed cleanout openings and the manhole cover. However, even though most of the unit is concealed, it is still very important to be observant of the location of the tank at all times. Damage to the septic tank and the connection to your home can cause very unpleasant problems, such as sewage backing up into your home or leaking into your yard. Refer to your as-built to determine the entire area in which your septic tank is located. You are responsible for keeping the septic tank and sewer line accessible.

Keep the area free and clear of trees, shrubs, decks, patios, and playground equipment. To avoid damage, do not drive vehicles or heavy equipment over the septic tank or sewer line. Keep livestock off the area.

There are three distinct layers of materials in the septic tank: The scum layer, wastewater, and sludge. The scum layer is comprised of floating solids such as grease and fat, which can form a hardened crust over time. As the solids settle to the bottom of the septic tank, they form what is called the sludge layer. The sludge layer continues to build up over time and eventually will require professional removal. The general guideline is to have your septic tank pumped every three to five years, but it really does depend on individual home usage and how selective you are as to what solid materials pass through your system. The wastewater that is between the two layers of solids is called effluent. The effluent is partially treated by anaerobic bacteria present in the tank, and it will continue to flow out of the tank through the next portion of the sewer system. Do note, the septic tank normally operates at a full level of liquid.

Flammable sewer gases are formed in the septic tank, and they will be present when the cover to the tank is open. To keep your sludge layer to a lower level and to ensure proper operation of your septic tank, you should not flush diapers, tampons, and sanitary napkins down the toilet. Also avoid flushing excess quantities of paper. It's important to be selective about what goes down the sink drains, too. Do not pour oils, grease, and kitchen refuse into the drain. Do not allow coffee grounds, tobacco products, or any rubber items to enter the system.

Keeping unwanted objects out of the septic tank will keep it operating properly. Do not pour strong detergents or disinfectants down the drain or into the septic tank. Daily use of mild household soaps and cleansers is safe. A small amount of bleach used for household cleaning and laundry is generally fine, but do not flush excess bleach or chlorine tablets. Do not introduce any chemical waste into the system.

A lagoon is a man-made pond used to continue the cycle of wastewater treatment. Effluent from the septic tank drains down into the lagoon. The system relies on evaporation for the water to be reintroduced into the environment. Proper evaporate requires adequate sunlight and airflow. Keep the grass mowed inside and outside the fence surrounding the lagoon. Cut down any trees and shrubs that start to grow around the lagoon, both inside and outside the fence line.

Do not dump trash or other debris in or near the lagoon. A healthy lagoon should not be overgrown with algae, and it should not have an offensive smell. Proper lagoon operation and maintenance is necessary to prevent mosquito problems.

For the safety of your family and community, the lagoon has been installed with a fence and locking gate. Do not remove the fence, gate, lock, or warning signs surrounding the lagoon. The water is safe to evaporate into the air, but it is not safe for drinking, swimming, or bathing. Keep children out of the lagoon. Do not allow livestock or pets into the fenced area.