

Necessary, Inc.

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Operation and Maintenance Guide for Mound Type On-site Sewage Facility

The Septic Tank:

The primary compartment of the septic tank receives all the sewage and wastewater from your household use of toilets, kitchen sink, garbage disposal, dishwasher, bathtubs, showers, clothes washers, and other plumbing fixtures. A lift station between the house and the septic tank pumps sewage to the septic tank. Solids will accumulate in the primary tank. The "sludge" sinks to the bottom and the "scum" floats on the top. The second compartment of the tank allows for most of the suspended solids to settle out, providing a clearer effluent to the pump tank and disposal fields. Bacteria in the sewage digest the solids, but not as fast as solids are added. When a large amount of solids accumulate, they must be pumped out before they are introduced into the pump or the disposal field. Solids in the pump tank can cause pump failure, and in the disposal field they can clog the distribution piping, reduce the efficient distribution of effluent and may cause effluent overflow. Such conditions are a potential health hazard and are illegal. Costly repairs may result, as well as legal charges and fines. Therefore, the maintenance of the septic tanks is very important. The septic tank should be pumped every two to three years by a licensed pumping service. The owner or owner's representative should be present when the tank is pumped to ensure that the solids as well as the liquids are pumped from the tanks. No structures or driveways should be built over the septic tanks, and no traffic should be allowed over the tanks.

The owner should strictly limit the amount of non-digestible and hard to digest wastes introduced into the septic tank including but not limited to grease, colored toilet paper, sanitary napkins, tampons, coffee grounds, disposable diapers, paper towels, cigarette butts, photographic wastes, plastics, paints, varnishes, solvents, oils, pesticides, medical wastes, metals, and large amounts of solids generated by garbage grinders. Absolutely NO MELON SEEDS should be allowed to get into either septic tank. The back-flush from water softeners should not be introduced into the septic tank or disposal field. Normal household use of soaps, detergents, bleach and other cleaning agents will not impair the functioning of the septic tank. Yeast or commercially available microbial preparations, while not harmful to the tank, will not enhance its functioning and are a waste of money.

A submersible pump delivers sewage effluent to the disposal field. It is equipped with a float switch that turns the pump on and off, and another float switch mounted higher in the tank that will activate a high water alarm, should the pump fail. Also, a submersible pump delivers sewage to the septic tank. The alarm turns on a light and buzzer (located on the side of the house). Please keep in mind that, in the event of a power failure to the house, neither the pumps nor the alarms will function. The electrical connection for the pumps and alarms should be kept free of ants, and protected from the weather.

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The Disposal Fields:

The mound type disposal fields dispose of the effluent by dispersing it into the soil mound. These fields must be manually switched by means of a "Jandy" valve. Simply switch the handle of the valve from one field to the other every six weeks to three months. Only your individual experience can dictate how often the fields should actually be switched, but four to six times per year is suggested for most households. The disposal mounds must be kept vegetated and regularly mowed. It is suggested that the mounds be over-seeded with winter rye in the fall to provide good transpiration (loss of water through plant respiration). No structures, sidewalks, patios, decks or driveways should be built over the disposal mounds, and no traffic should be allowed over the disposal mounds.

Water Conservation Tips:

- Leaky toilets and faucets can inundate an on-site sewage facility in a short time and cause its failure by overflow of sewage. Turn off the water supply to a leaking or dripping fixture until it can be fixed or replaced. If any toilets must be replaced, the new unit should use 1.6 gallons of water or less. Water can also be conserved by replacing showerheads with low water use models, and adding aerators to faucets.
- Check toilets periodically for leaks by adding food color to the tank. If there is a leak, the color will appear in the bowl without flushing.
- Scrape dishes before placing them in the dishwasher and wash only full loads. Water saving dishwashers are available which use about 1/3 the water used by conventional dishwashers.
- Wash only full loads of clothes if your washing machine does not have an adjustment setting for smaller loads. Wash clothes throughout the week, not all on one day. If the clothes washer is to be replaced, replace it with a front loading washer. Water saving clothes washers are available which use about 1/3 the water used by conventional washers.
- Avoid running the water continuously while rinsing dishes or washing fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid running the water continuously while brushing teeth or shaving.