

# Necessary, Inc.

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1005 Lund Street • Austin, Texas • 78704-2015 • 512/445-2250 • Fax 512/912-8628 • mail@necessaryinc.com

## **Operation and Maintenance Guide for Conventional Absorption On-site Sewage Facilities**

### **Maintenance:**

#### **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. Solids will accumulate in the primary compartment of the septic tank. The "sludge" sinks to the bottom and the "scum" floats on the top. The second compartment allows for most of the suspended solids to settle out, providing a clearer effluent to the disposal field or pump tank. 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 disposal field. Solids in the disposal field 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 tank is very important. The tank should be pumped every three to five 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 tank. No structures or driveways should be built over the septic tank, and no traffic should be allowed over the tank.

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. The backflush 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.

#### **The Disposal Field**

The disposal field allows the absorption of the liquid effluent into the soil. No structures, sidewalks, patios, decks or driveways should be built over the disposal field, and no traffic should be allowed over the disposal field.

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## **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.