

## SEPTIC TANK DO'S & DON'TS

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### Things to Do

- **Do** learn the location of your septic tank and drainfield. Keep a sketch of it handy with your maintenance record for service visits.
- **Do** have your septic tank inspected annually.
- **Do** have your septic tank cover accessible for inspections and pumpings. Install risers if necessary.
- **Do** call a professional whenever you experience problems with your system, or if there are any signs of system failure.
- **Do** keep a detailed record of repairs, pumpings, inspections, permits issued, and other maintenance activities.
- **Do** conserve water to avoid overloading the system. Be sure to repair any leaky faucets or toilets.
- **Do** divert other sources of water, like roof drains, house footing drains, and sump pumps away from the septic system. Excessive water keeps the soil in the drainfield from naturally cleansing the wastewater.

### Things Not to Do

- **Don't** go down into a septic tank. Toxic gases are produced by the natural treatment processes in septic tanks and can kill in minutes. Extreme care should be taken when inspecting a septic tank, even when just looking in.
- **Don't** allow anyone to drive or park over any part of the system.
- **Don't** dig in your drainfield or build anything over it, and don't cover the drainfield with a hard surface such as concrete or asphalt. The area over the drainfield should only have a grass cover. The grass will not only prevent erosion, but will help remove excess water.
- **Don't** plant anything over or near the drainfield except grass. Roots from nearby trees or shrubs may clog and damage the drain lines.
- **Don't** make or allow repairs to your septic system without obtaining the required health department permit. Use professional licensed septic contractors when needed.
- **Don't** use septic tank additives. These products usually do not help and some may even be harmful to your system.
- **Don't** use your toilet as a trash can or poison your septic system by pouring harmful chemicals and cleansers down the drain. Harsh chemicals can kill the beneficial bacteria that treat your wastewater.
- **Don't** allow backwash from your home water softeners to enter your septic system.



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## Septic Tank Pumping

This chart shows in years how frequently a septic tank should be pumped based on the size of the tank and the number of people in the household.

These figures assume that there is no garbage disposal unit in use.

NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN HOUSEHOLD						
Tank Size (Gallons)	1	2	3	4	5	6
1000	12.4	5.9	3.7	2.6	2.0	1.5
1250	15.6	7.5	4.8	3.4	2.6	2.0
1500	18.9	9.1	5.9	4.2	3.3	2.6
1750	22.1	10.7	6.9	5.0	3.9	3.1
2000	25.4	12.4	8.0	5.9	4.5	3.7
2250	28.6	14.0	9.1	6.7	5.2	4.2

Source: Pennsylvania State University Cooperative Extension Service.