



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## JO DAVIESS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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### CLEANING YOUR SEPTIC TANK EFFLUENT FILTER

1. If the liquid level in the tank is above the white square filter housing, it is recommended that the tank is pumped by a licensed septic pumper. If pumping is not possible, the filter element can still be removed, but a discharge of some floating solids could occur through the housing. **Use rubber gloves when cleaning the filter.**
2. Remove the filter element from the housing. The filter is located in the outlet end of the septic tank.
3. Using a garden hose, rinse the organic material off the filter allowing the rinse water to drain back into the tank's opening.
4. If a hose is not available, shake the filter in a 5 gallon bucket filled  $\frac{3}{4}$  full with water. Avoid splashing the rinse water on the ground and when clean, pour the rinse water into the tank.
5. The filter element can only be installed into the housing when properly aligned. Insert the element into the housing unit until the filter fully sits in place. The cleaning is now complete.
6. If any spillage occurred during cleaning, cleanup will be necessary. Spills may be diluted with clean water and rinsed back into the tank.
7. Maintenance of your filter may be required multiple times per year.
8. A number of potential problems may arise without warning if you do not maintain your filter. Problems may include sewage backing up into your building structure, the discharge of sewage through the manhole to the ground surface, and/or sewage bypassing a clogged filter allowing solid material into the drainfield.
9. In tanks that have a blue filter, a check valve is in place that prevents unfiltered flow from leaving the tank when the filter is missing.