

Home Sewage Treatment:

SEPTIC SYSTEM DO'S & DON'Ts

The Do's

Do have your septic system pumped out by a licensed contractor every 3 to 4 years for a full time residence.

Do keep your septic tank cover accessible for inspections and pumping. Install risers to the tank if necessary.

Do regular maintenance on your **effluent filter** as needed. (All systems installed after August 2000 have a septic tank filter.)

Do call a licensed septic installer whenever you experience problems with your system, or if there are any other signs of failure.

Do keep a detailed record of repairs, pumping, inspections, permit issued, and other maintenance activities. It'll come in handy when it comes time to sell your house.

Do conserve water to avoid overloading the system. Be sure to repair any leaky faucets or toilets. No more than 2 loads of laundry should be done in one day.

Do annual maintenance to your effluent filter. Pull out your filter and hose it down to prevent an overabundance of solids into your drainfield.

The Don'ts

Don't go down into a septic tank. Toxic gasses are produced by the natural treatment processes in septic tanks, and can kill in minutes. Extreme care should be taken, even when just looking in.

Don't allow any one to drive, or park, over the septic system.

Don't plant anything over or near the septic system except grass roots. Roots from certain types of trees and shrubs may clog and damage the drainfield.

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 have only a grass cover. The grass will not only prevent erosion, but will help remove excess water.

Don't make or allow repairs to your septic system without obtaining the required health departments permits. Use a licensed septic contractor.

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 and groundwater by pouring harmful chemicals, cleaners and antibiotics down the drain. Harsh chemicals can kill the beneficial bacteria that treat your wastewater.

Seek Assistance

The ideas presented here are meant to make you, the homeowner, aware of your private sewage disposal system and its limitations.

Jo Daviess County Health Department has on file a record of most of the private sewage disposal systems installed in the county since 1972. These records, which include design criteria, size, and location of the system is available upon request. Health Department sanitarians are also available to assist you with any question you may have regarding private sewage disposal, or supply you with lists of licensed septic installers and septic pumpers.

Should you have any further questions, please feel free to call the Environmental Health office at (815) 777-0283 or toll free at 877-777-0283.