

**DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT #4**  
Operation and Maintenance of Your Septic System

**1. Practice water conservation**

- Use low use fittings on showers and toilet tanks
- Wash clothes on the large load cycle, and not all loads on the same day
- Repair leaking fixtures, especially the toilet tank
- Do not run water needlessly, e.g., when brushing teeth turn water off

**2. Avoid unnecessary water entering your septic tank and drainfield**

- Garbage disposals add an extra load of solids to your septic tank
- Do not pump ground water from your sump into your septic tank
- Divert storm runoff and snow melt water-slope away
- Down spout water should be directed away from the septic system
- Do not place a sprinkler head over a drainfield
- Water softener discharge can be diverted to a separate seepage area
- Swimming pool or hot tub water should not go into the septic system
- All wastewater must go into the sewer line and then into the septic tank

**3. Be careful what kinds of products you flush down the drain**

- Disposable diapers, flushable/disposable wipes, paper products, plastic products and food products add to solids in the septic tank and may cause clogging of a sewer line
- Use household cleaning products in moderation
- Never dump toxic materials down the drain including gas, oil, paint, and pesticides as they may kill bacteria or cause ground water contamination
- Additives are typically not necessary

**4. Soil cover and landscaping**

- Add a layer of top soil over sandy soils over the drainfield and plant grass
- Do not cover the drainfield with clay soils as this restricts oxygen
- Mound the soil slightly over the drainfield to divert rain water or runoff
- Trees or plants with deep roots should not be planted over or next to the septic tank or drainfield

**5. Protecting the septic system area**

- Protect from freezing if vehicles, snowmobiles, sidewalks, or even foot paths cross them during freezing weather
- Do not place parking areas, driveways, swimming pools, outbuildings, garages, or other structures over the septic tank or drainfield

**6. Signs of problems**

- Slow drains or back-up in the wastewater drains
- Lush green grass in the yard or weed growth in the lake
- Ponding of liquids, soggy area, or foul-smelling seepage in the yard
- Call a septic tank pumper, a septic system installer, or the health department
- Sewage contains microorganisms that are infectious and may adversely affect human health