

## Take Care of Your Septic System

A properly functioning septic system helps your property retain its value. Follow these steps to help your system provide years of effective wastewater treatment.

**Monitor** your septic system to ensure that it is functioning properly. Get your solid levels checked in your septic tank annually. The septic tank should be pumped out when the tank is 1/3 full of solids.

**Maintain** your septic tank by having it pumped out every 3 to 5 years or more often if required. The frequency of pumping depends on the size of your septic tank and the number of users in your household. Removing solids from your septic tank prevents particles from entering the drainfield and soil which is a major cause of a system failure.

**Reduce** the amount of water going into your system. Excessive water can flush solids into the drainfield before they settle in the tank, causing problems for waste filtration.

**Refrain** from putting non-biodegradable materials down your drains. Avoid flushing items such as dental floss, diapers, flushable wipes, feminine hygiene products and other solids which can clog your drainfield. Similarly, refrain from putting grease, fats, medications or harmful chemicals such as paints and solvents down the drain. Some chemicals and cleaners kill the beneficial bacteria in your septic tank, requiring you to have your tank pumped more often. Harmful chemicals can also be carried from your septic field into watercourses and drinking wells.

**Protect** your drainfield by leaving it as undisturbed as possible. Do not drive or park on it. Landscape with grass and avoid plants with deep roots that can damage your system.

## Locate Your Septic System

If you don't know where your system is, contact your local Fraser Health office for an as-built diagram of your system. Make sure to keep a copy handy for your next septic system inspection.

Fraser Health Authority  
Abbotsford Health Protection Office  
604-870-7900  
fraserhealth.ca

## Contact An Authorized Person to Maintain or Repair Your System

Under the provincial Sewerage System Regulation, only an Authorized Person may install or repair a septic system. An Authorized Person may be a Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP) registered through the Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC or a Professional Engineer or Geoscientist registered through Engineers and Geoscientists of BC.

Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC  
Onsite Wastewater Registration Program  
owrp.asttbc.org/rowp-finder

Engineers and Geoscientists of BC  
1-888-430-8035  
egbc.ca



45950 Cheam Ave Chilliwack, BC V2P 1N6  
Phone: 1-800-528-0061 | fvr.d.ca/septic

# SEPTIC SENSE

*How to care for your  
residential septic system*



## Do Your Part. Have Septic Sense.

Keeping your system well maintained protects your family, your community, and the environment while saving you money.

Visit [fvrd.ca/septic](http://fvrd.ca/septic) for more information.

Keep all vehicles, heavy equipment and farm animals off the drainfield area. The only exception is the lawn mower.



## What Is A Septic System?

All homes need a way to process their wastewater and sewage originating from our sinks, bathtubs, showers, washing machines, and toilets. Many rural homeowners are not connected to a municipal sewer system, so septic systems are used as the main method of sewage and wastewater treatment.

A septic system is a self-contained, underground wastewater treatment system that is designed to hold, treat and dispose of household wastewater. When the liquid portion leaves the system, it can eventually reach groundwater or surface water, and be recycled back into your drinking water source. If wastewater is improperly treated, it can pollute local water sources that you and your community use for drinking water or recreational activities. Proper care and maintenance of your septic system will help prevent contamination of local water sources, protecting the health of your family, community and the environment.

## DRAINFIELD

Partially treated water exits the tank and is distributed into the drainfield, a network of underground perforated pipes, sitting in trenches of drain rock. Small holes in the pipes allow the wastewater to seep into the drain rock and then to the soil. The soil in the drainfield removes bacteria and viruses from the liquid waste. To enable sufficient effluent treatment, a depth of suitable soil is needed. With suitable soil and adequate separation distances from water tables, this effluent will safely return to the groundwater.

## SEPTIC TANK

As wastewater leaves your home's plumbing system and enters your septic tank, solids and liquids will separate into different layers. Over a short time, the solids will sink to the bottom and become sludge, while the oils and grease will float to the top of the tank and form the scum layer. Your septic tank is designed so that the scum and sludge do not clog up the drainfield. The middle liquid layer in the septic tank (called effluent), will flow through a filter and into the distribution box before it reaches the drainfield.