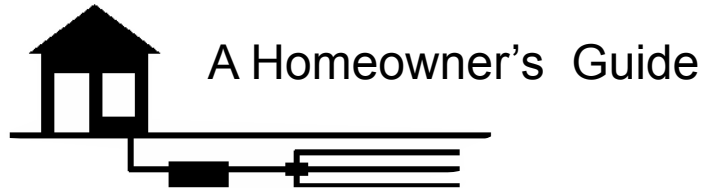


Septic Systems



650 Old Greene Road
Lewiston ME 04240
207-782-5940
www.maineptic.com

Caring for Your Septic System

In order to keep your septic system working properly, it must be maintained regularly. Regular maintenance includes pumping your tank every three to five years to remove the solids that accumulate at the bottom of the tank.

A poorly maintained septic system can result in system failure, which can:

- Harm the environment, especially lakes, streams and groundwater.
- Create a serious health threat to your family and neighbors.
- Reduce the value of your property.
- Become expensive to repair.
- If your septic system is located in a public water supply watershed, you could put the water supply users at risk.

Warning signs of a failing system

- Slow draining toilets or drains.
- Sewage odors.
- Sewage back-ups in the house.
- Sewage surfacing over the absorption area, especially after storms.
- Lush, green growth over the absorption area.

Any of these warning signs could indicate a system failure or that the tank needs to be pumped. A licensed septic contractor can pump and/or inspect your septic system.

What **IS** a septic system?

A septic system is a recycling system that treats wastewater and returns it to the groundwater. There are many types of septic systems, but most are based on the same principles.

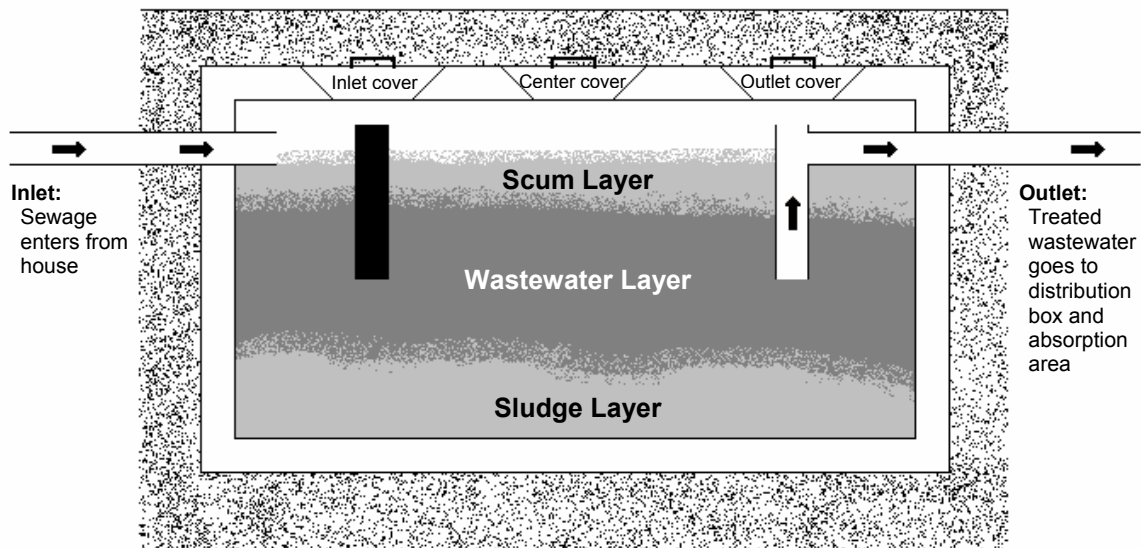
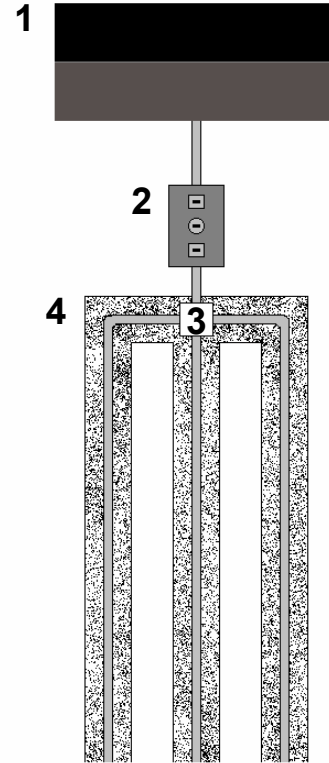
Components of a septic system:

1-House

2-Septic tank Temporarily holds wastewater, heavier solids and lighter scum separate from wastewater. The solids are decomposed by bacteria, and along with the scum, are later removed by a professional septic tank pumper.

3-Distribution box After the wastewater leaves the tank, it flows through the distribution box, which distributes the flow evenly into the absorption area.

4-Absorption Area Wastewater flows into the absorption area and out through drain holes in the bottom of the lines. The wastewater then drains into gravel trenches, then slowly seeps into the subsurface soil where it is further treated and purified.



Tips

For A Healthy Septic System

■ **Conserve water**

To reduce the amount of wastewater that must be treated and disposed of, repair dripping faucets and leaking toilets, run washing machines and dishwashers only when full, avoid long showers, install water-saving devices in faucets, shower heads and toilets.

■ **Keep your septic tank cover accessible for tank inspections and pumping**

If the septic tank is buried six inches or deeper, install a riser over the center cover to provide easy access for inspection and pumping.

■ **Have your tank pumped regularly**

Tanks should be pumped out at least once every three to five years.

■ **Keep a maintenance record**

Use the form on the back of this brochure to keep track of pumping, inspections and other maintenance.

■ **Know the location of your septic system and absorption area**

Keep a map of your septic system (see page 4). Keep it on hand for service visits.

■ **Don't flush non-biodegradable products into your system**

Items such as: dental floss, cigarette butts, cotton swabs, cat box litter, sanitary napkins, tampons, disposable diapers, and condoms are not biodegradable and will fill up your septic tank more quickly, requiring more frequent pumping.

■ **Restrict use of garbage disposal**

Waste from garbage disposals will fill your septic tank more rapidly, requiring more frequent pumping, and will also float and increase the scum blanket thickness.

■ **Don't poison your system**

Dumping solvents, oils, paints, thinners, disinfectants, pesticides or poisons down the drain can contaminate groundwater and kill bacteria that help purify sewage. Take household chemicals to an approved hazardous waste collection center.

■ **Don't use commercial septic tank additives**

These usually do not help and some can hurt your system over time.

■ **Keep water runoff away from system**

Divert roof drains and surface water from driveways and hillsides away from the septic system, as well as sump pumps and house footing drains

■ **Keep deep rooted trees and bushes away from the leaching system**

The roots can grow into the system, and clog and damage the drain lines.

■ **Don't drive or park on the system**

The weight of a vehicle can damage any part of the septic system and may result in system failure and costly repairs.

■ **Don't plow or shovel snow off the septic system**

Without the insulation of the snow, the septic system can freeze.

■ **Obtain required permits before performing work on the system**

Before working on, or allowing repairs to your system, be sure to obtain the required health department permit.

■ **Call a septic professional when you have problems**

For Your Records

Service Log

Date	Work Done	Contractor

Reference Map

To save time when it's time to pump the tank or do repair work, sketch a map of your house and the location of:

- The center cover of the septic tank
- The absorption system
- Trees, rocks or other reference points

Measure distances from reference points to the center of your septic tank, and to the corners of your absorption

