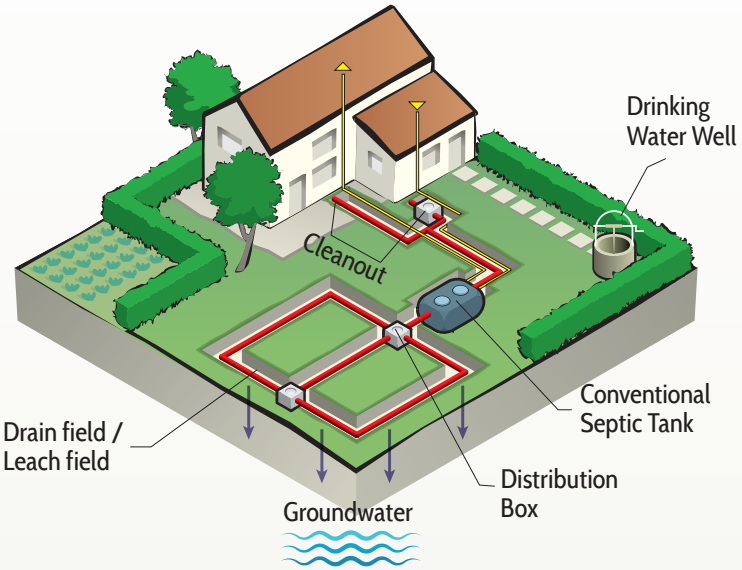
SEPTIC SYSTEM HOMEOWNER GUIDE AND CARE



DID YOU KNOW YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM CAN IMPACT NEARBY WATERBODIES?

Septic systems can effectively treat wastewater in areas which are not served by centralized sewer systems. When properly designed, installed, and maintained they can effectively protect water quality. With a basic understanding of how septic systems function and minimal expense, you can ensure your system functions properly and protects Teton County's water quality.

DO I HAVE A SEPTIC SYSTEM?

You can learn if you have a septic system by visiting the Teton County Engineering Septic Systems web page: Teton County Wastewater Map

KNOW THE SIGNS OF SEPTIC SYSTEM MALFUNCTION

The following may be signs of a clogged septic system, a full septic tank, or other failures and may require you to contact a septic system contractor for additional assistance:

- Pooling water or mudding soil in the vicinity of the septic system, basement, or other areas of the property.
- Wastewater backup in household drains.
- Slow drains in the home.
- Bright green, spongy grass appearing in the yard caused by an increase of "fertilizer" from the septic system.
- A strong odor around the septic tank, in the yard, or emanating from household drains or toilets.
- If you test you well regularly and notice increased nitrate concentrations, it may be caused by your septic system. At a minimum, test your well when you have your septic system pumped.

Visit these websites to learn more:

https://www.epa.gov/septic

https://tetoncountywy.gov/547/Septic-Systems

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Homeowners, follow these steps to prevent your home's septic system from impacting water quality.

1 INSPECT AND PUMP YOUR SYSTEM REGULARLY

- Septic systems should be inspected at least every three years by a qualified service technician. This can avoid catastrophic failure and expensive replacement.
- Inspections should include:
  - Removing the septic tank covers and verifying they are properly secured when closed to prevent unauthorized access to the septic tank.
  - Observing the flow of water through the tank by running water in the house.
  - Inspecting the septic tank inlet, outlet baffle, and partition wall to confirm each component is intact.
  - Inspecting the distribution box (if equipped) to verify wastewater is being evenly distributed throughout the drainfield.
  - Determining the operational levels of sewage.
- Septic tanks should be pumped when the scum and sludge layers displace greater than 50% of the tank's volume. Generally, this occurs every three to five years. Septic system problems are often caused because septic tanks are not emptied frequently enough.

2 PROPERLY DISPOSE OF WASTE

Solid wastes and chemicals that are disposed of in toilets, drains, and sinks impact septic systems. Only dispose of biodegradable products that won't clog or kill important microbes in your system and potentially contribute harmful chemicals to nearby drinking water and groundwater sources.

- Do not flush fats and grease, diapers, non-flushable wipes, coffee grounds, paper towels, feminine hygiene products, household chemicals, or other chemical products like pesticides and hot tub treatments.
- Avoid pouring toxins down your drain, such as, chemical drain openers, cooking oil or grease, oil-based paints, solvents, or large volumes of toxic cleaners. Use household cleaning products that are phosphate free to reduce the amount of phosphate in the wastewater.
- Eliminate or limit the use of a garbage disposal. This will significantly reduce the amount of fats, grease, and solids that enter the septic tank and ultimately clog the drainfield. This will also reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorous in the wastewater.

3 USE WATER EFFICIENTLY

Reducing the volume of water entering a septic system helps improve the operation of the system. Consider using high-efficiency toilets, faucet aerators, and high efficiency showerheads to conserve water use. Run full loads of laundry or select the proper load size, and consider using your washing machine throughout the week, rather than all in one day, as this can harm your septic system, not allow your septic tank enough time to treat waste and could flood your drainfield.

4 PROTECT YOUR DRAINFIELD

Eliminate runoff or standing water near the septic system drainfield and remove heavy items from atop of the drainfield to avoid impacts to the system. Plant trees the appropriate distance from your drainfield to keep roots from growing into your septic system.

5 INSTALL AN EFFLUENT FILTER OR ADVANCED TREATMENT SYSTEM

Installing an effluent filter improves the efficiency of the septic system by preventing small solids from exiting the tank and entering the drainfield and reducing the likelihood of your drainfield becoming clogged. An advanced treatment system reduces the solids content, nitrogen, and biochemical oxygen demand in your wastewater and improve the efficiency of your septic system.

6 PREPARE YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM FOR EXTENDED ABSENCES FROM YOUR HOME

Keep your septic system healthy while away for long time periods. Consider winterizing your pipes by turning off all water, draining pipes, and keeping faucets open and appliances disconnected. Prior to leaving, fix any malfunctions to the septic system, plumbing fixtures, or appliances.

Water Quality Master Plan
Teton County · Wyoming
TETON COUNTY WYOMING
PROTECT OUR WATER JACKSON HOLE
Teton Conservation District Est. 1946
TOWN OF JACKSON WYOMING
Trihydro
FLITNER STRATEGIES