



## DO

- Have your tank pumped and inspected every 2-3 years.
- Practice water conservation by repairing water leaks and conserve wash loads to full loads.
- Use water-saving fixtures for faucets, shower-heads, and toilets.
- Know the location of your septic system and leach field.
- Divert roof drains, sump pump drains, and run-off from driveways and hill sides, away from the septic system.
- Use bleach, disinfectants, drain and toilet bowl cleaners  **sparingly** and dispose of leftover hazardous household chemicals at your approved hazardous waste collection center.

## DON'T

- Park, or drive over septic systems or allow roots from nearby trees or shrubs to clog and damage your drain lines.
- Make or allow repairs to septic system without obtaining a health department permit.
- Use commercial septic tank additives. Flush non-degradables like grease, disposable diapers, plastics, disposable wipes, or flush poisons like antifreeze, gasoline, paint, paint thinner or pesticides.

## Beware of Stormwater Pollution

Stormwater recharges our water aquifers with fresh, clean water for our drinking supply, our agricultural needs, our beautiful environmental resources, and aquatic life.

Runoff from our land surfaces, especially our paved, impervious surfaces, and our lawns can wash pollutants into our streams, rivers and oceans. Infiltration of the pollutants can contaminate our groundwater with pathogens making our water supply undrinkable, our shellfish areas inedible, and our aquatic environment destroyed.

Currently, the Assabet River has been identified as an impaired water body with high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen. CPW encourages homeowners to practice good septic system maintenance habits. For those who use septic service companies please inform them about the tips listed in this brochure.

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## Stormwater Pollution Prevention Caring for your Septic System



## Caring for your Septic System

Septic systems must be maintained regularly to work properly. Neglect or abuse of your system can cause it to fail.

Failing systems can cause a serious health threat to your family and neighbors, degrade the environment, reduce the value of your property, can be expensive to repair, and can put water supplies at risk.

Watch out for warning signs of a failing system!

Look for sewage surfacing on the drain field, sewage back ups in the house, lush, green growth over the leach field, slow draining toilets or drains, and sewage odors.



## How our Septic Systems Work

A conventional septic system consists of a septic tank, a distribution box, and a leach field. They are connected by pipes, called conveyance lines.

Your septic system treats your household wastewater by temporarily holding it in the septic tank where heavy solids and lighter scum are allowed to separate from the wastewater. This separation process is known as primary treatment. The solids stored in the tank are decomposed by bacteria and later removed, along with the lighter scum, by a professional septic tank pumper.

After partially treated wastewater leaves the tank, it flows into a distribution box, which separates this flow evenly into a network of leach field trenches. Drainage holes at the bottom of each line allow the wastewater to drain into gravel trenches for temporary storage. This effluent then slowly infiltrates into the subsurface soil where it is further treated and purified (secondary treatment). A properly functioning septic system does not pollute the groundwater.

