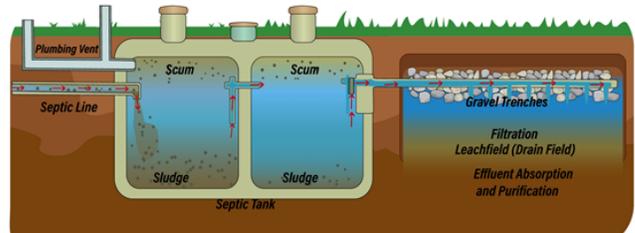


# Septic System Maintenance

## ***Why does septic system maintenance matter?***

Septic systems safely treat household wastewater, but without regular care they can fail early, causing sewage backups, costly repairs, and contamination of soil and groundwater that can threaten drinking water, the environment and public health.

Septic Tank System



## ***Why is regular maintenance important?***

Regular maintenance helps homeowners avoid emergencies, save money, and protect environmental and public health. Virginia law requires alternative onsite septic system owners to have their systems inspected and properly maintained through annual licensed-operator inspections and routine pumping to prevent failures, protect public health, and ensure compliance with state standards.

## ***How does a septic system work?***

Conventional systems use a tank where solids settle and bacteria break down waste, then liquid moves to the drainfield to be filtered through soil. Alternative systems serve sites where conventional systems won't work, such as properties with poor soil, steep slopes and/or lack of space.

## ***What steps are needed for regular maintenance?***

- Have the septic tank pumped and inspected by a licensed professional every three to five years
- Use water-saving fixtures and fix leaks quickly
- Flush only human waste and toilet paper
- Keep grease, chemicals, and medications out of drains
- Use septic-safe cleaning products

***For more information:*** [vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-health/onsite-sewage-system-owner-responsibilities/](http://vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-health/onsite-sewage-system-owner-responsibilities/)



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