

SEPTIC SYSTEM CARE

It's not just about pumping! These simple steps can help maintain your system.

CONSERVE WATER -

Fix leaky faucets and toilets to prevent washing away the healthy bacteria your system needs.

SPACE OUT WATER USE -

Spreading out washing machine loads and other large water uses (showers, dishwashers, etc.) gives your system a chance to work between loads.

FLUSH ONLY HUMAN WASTE & TOILET PAPER -

"Flushable" on a label may mean only that it fits down the drain... if in doubt, throw it out.

DON'T PARK OR DRIVE OVER YOUR SYSTEM -

This can easily damage the septic system.



HOW DOES A SEPTIC SYSTEM WORK?



- 1 Whatever goes down the drain is your domestic wastewater. All drains in your house lead to one large drainage pipe that empties into your septic tank.
- 2 The septic tank is a buried, water-tight container, usually made of concrete or polyethylene. It holds the wastewater long enough for solids to settle to the bottom, while oils and grease float to the top. Special compartments keep the solids from flowing into the leach field.

Liquid wastewater leaves the tank and enters the leach field, where special pipes allow the water to slowly seep into the surrounding soil, naturally removing harmful bacteria, viruses and nutrients before they enter the groundwater.
- 3

DO I HAVE A SEPTIC SYSTEM?

You most likely have a septic system if:

- You are on well water and you don't pay a water or sewer utility bill and/or your neighbors have septic systems.

HOW DO I FIND MY SEPTIC?

- Check your yard for wood lids or manhole covers.
- Have a NHDES-licensed septage hauler help you find the system. Find one here: <https://www.des.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt341/files/documents/septage-haulers.pdf>
- Request records through the NHDES Subsurface System File and Archive using this online form: <https://onlineforms.nh.gov/>



PROTECT YOUR FAMILY

If your septic system gets clogged with too much solid waste, it can force the wastewater to back up into your house... it can also overwhelm your leach field, which will turn your yard into a soggy mess. The bacteria in wastewater are not just smelly – they are also a health hazard!

PROTECT YOUR COMMUNITY

If a septic system fails, untreated wastewater can run off into local lakes, ponds or streams, negatively impacting water quality, wildlife and community enjoyment of the water

PROTECT YOUR WALLET

Getting your tank pumped costs about \$250-\$500 every 3-5 years. If you have a failure, it could cost you \$6,000-\$15,000 to replace or repair your system.



THINK BLUE!
WATER | WASTEWATER | STORMWATER

WHY SHOULD I PUMP?

Every home generates wastewater – via toilets, showers, sink drains, and dishwashers and washing machines – that flows into your septic tank and must be treated and disposed of properly to protect human health and the environment.

WHEN SHOULD I PUMP?

Don't wait for a failure! Septic tanks should be inspected or pumped every 3-5 years. Get Pumped today!

Visit getpumpednh.com to find a New Hampshire Association of Septage Haulers (NHASH) member in your area.

The City of Portsmouth cares about clean water and is doing our part to help prevent water pollution in local waterways. This brochure helps our community meet US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements (including the MS4 program) to share pollution prevention information with our residents.



City of Portsmouth Department of Public Works
680 Peverly Hill Road, Portsmouth NH 03801
(603) 427-1530

CityofPortsmouth.com/publicworks/wastewater

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



www.des.nh.gov



nhash.com



Get Pumped Portsmouth!

*Don't wait for a failure to
schedule a septic system
pumpout*