



Erie County Department of Health's Top 10 Operation and Maintenance Tips For Your Septic System

1. Septic tanks should be pumped every three to five years. Pumping your septic tank is less expensive than replacing your whole system.
2. All roof, cellar, and footing drainage and surface water should not be drained to your septic system. Drainage water may be discharged to the ground surface with out treatment. However, make sure it drains away from your septic system.
3. Do not use your septic system for a driveway, parking lot or pasture for animals. Never cover your septic system with pavement or concrete.



4. Conserve water. Repair leaky faucets and malfunctioning toilet tanks. Install fixtures in your home that use less water.



5. Harmful chemicals should not be discharged into the tank; avoid fats, solvents, oils, coffee grounds, and excessive detergents, and hazardous household products. Don't put paint thinners, pesticides, photo-developing chemicals, motor oils, or antibiotic drugs down drains. Do not use caustic drain openers for a clogged drain. Instead, use boiling water or a drain snake to open clogs. Many chemicals can kill the microorganisms in your septic system.

6. Do not flush cigarette butts, diapers, condoms, tampons, paper towels, kitty litter, dental floss, etc
7. Do not make or allow repairs to your septic system without the required Erie County Health Department permit.



8. Garbage grinders substantially increase the accumulation of solids in the septic tanks, as well as the solids entering the absorption fields and pits. Their disadvantages outweigh the convenience they provide and are not recommended for households with their own sewage treatment systems. If used, the septic tank size should be increased.

9. The area over the septic system should be planted with grass only. Do not plant trees and shrubs in the area of your septic system. Roots from trees and shrubs can get into absorption field lines and plug them.



10. Septic tank additives are not recommended. Additives are unnecessary to the proper operation of household systems and may cause the sludge and scum in the septic tank to be discharged into the absorption field, resulting in premature failure. Some additives may actually pollute groundwater.

For additional information please contact
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