

# Septic system DO's and DON'Ts

## A quick reference guide to extend the life of your septic system

A properly constructed and maintained system can last a long time if you follow some common septic system DO's and DON'Ts:

- ü **DO** conserve water and fix leaks quickly. Installing high efficiency appliances, such as washers and low-flow toilets, can extend the life of your system while leaky faucets can limit your system's capacity. If you have periods of high water use, talk to a septic professional about helping your system manage the spikes.
- ü **DO** have your septic tank routinely serviced as specified by a licensed professional.
- ü **DO** regularly check the condition of your septic system and any access covers. Unsecured or unsafe lids can be dangerous to children or pets; falling into a septic tank can be fatal.
- ü **DO** keep your septic tank cover accessible for inspections and pumping. You may wish to install septic tank risers to avoid having to disturb your lawn for every maintenance event.
- ü **DO** keep records of repairs, pumping, inspections, permits issued, and other SSTS maintenance activities.
- ü **DO** identify the location of your septic tank and drainfield. A sketch or map allows easier navigation to septic system components.
- ü **DO** divert water sources such as roof drains, house footing drains, and sump pumps away from the septic system— they shouldn't flow into the system or onto the ground over your system. Excessive water can cause back-ups and premature system failure.
- ü **DO** call a licensed professional if you experience problems with your system, or if there are any signs of system failure.

### ü **DON'T** flush the following items:

- Lint or clothing fibers
- Diapers
- Cigarette butts
- Facial tissue
- Condoms
- Feminine hygiene products
- Unused medications
- Paint or solvents
- Flammable material
- Coffee grounds
- Cat litter
- Cooking oils and grease
- "Flushable" wipes or paper towels

These items will shorten the life of your system and may cause component failures or sewage backups. ONLY human waste and toilet paper should ever be flushed. Minimize use of harsh cleaners, bleach, and antibacterial soaps.

- ü **DON'T** drive over or park anything above the septic tank or drainfield. This can limit system life and cause damage.
- ü **DON'T** plant deep rooted plants over or near the drainfield. Roots from trees or shrubs may clog and damage drain lines. Plant grass or flowers instead (no vegetables), but don't fertilize, water, or burn them.
- ü **DON'T** dig in or build anything on top of your drainfield, particularly playgrounds.
- ü **DON'T** make or allow repairs to your septic system without obtaining the required local permits and professional assistance.
- ü **DON'T** enter your septic tank. Working in and around a septic tank is dangerous, and gases generated in the tank could be fatal.