

**A MESSAGE FROM THE SEATTLE KING COUNTY AND SNOHOMISH COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH-ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

ATTENTION HOMEOWNERS

Your Septic System Has Limitations!

It was designed and installed to serve an average-size family. Overloading the septic tank or disturbance of the drainfield may seriously impair satisfactory operation.

Points to remember:

1. Have your tank checked periodically to see if pumping is necessary every two years.
2. Do not channel ground water, surface water, footing drains or down spouts into the tank or near the drainfield area.
3. Do not excavate, fill, place a structure, driveway or patio in, on, or over the drainfield or septic tank.
4. Limit toilet fixture disposal to sanitary wastes and toilet tissue only.
5. Detergents and bleaches used in normal household quantities will not harm the action of the septic tank and disposal field, but be conservative. Too much bleach or detergent can kill the needed bacteria in the system.
6. Garbage disposals are not recommended for septic tanks. If you have one and use it, you must service the system more often.
7. Space water usage as much as possible (never do several loads of laundry on the same day). This can overload the absorption system and damage it.
8. Never wash down sidewalls of tank after pumping. (Natural bacteria are what make your system work.) One or two inches of sludge can be left in the tank for bacteria.
9. Check outlet baffle periodically and replace immediately if damaged or missing. This baffle prevents solids from entering (and eventually destroying) your drainfield.
10. Grass is the only plant life you can safely put in the drainfield area.
11. Do not allow vehicles, heavy equipment, or large animal (horses, pigs, cows) on the drainfield area. Soil compaction reduces the efficiency of the soil absorption system. Broken pipes can be expensive to repair.

The above information is provided to homeowners by the health department and is based on a family of four (three bedroom home). More frequent pumping may be necessary for larger families and homes using garbage disposals or homes with alternative systems such as mound systems or sand filter systems.