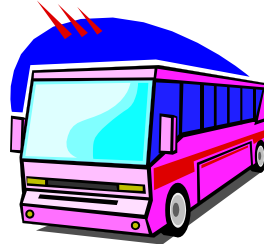




Septic System Don'ts

- **Don't** flush floor wax, rug cleaners, pool and spa products, excessive amounts of bleach, paint, solvents, or any other chemicals into your septic tank. These products will interfere with the normal operation of your system.
- **Don't** dispose of inappropriate materials down the drain, such as: Diapers, Oils, Coffee grounds, Bones, Grease, Dental Floss, Plastics, Hair, Kitty Litter, Tampons/Pads, Paper towels, Egg shells, Cigarette butts, etc. as these items do not dissolve and will require your system to be pumped more frequently.
- **Don't** dig into or around your septic system.
- **Don't** drive or park on any portion of your septic system.
- **Don't** plant anything other than grass or other shallow-rooted plants over or around your septic system.

- **Don't** repair without permits. Any short-term savings could be offset by having to uncover uninspected work or by legal entanglements.
- **Don't** raise or lower the level of the ground over filters or drain field areas. Adding soil decreases your systems ability to breathe and function as designed.
- **Don't** dump recreational vehicle (RV) waste into your septic tank. The system is designed for your residence flow and may not be able to handle the extra solids load. RV waste may also contain chemicals that are toxic or that may hamper the biological activity in your system.
- **Don't** build anything over any part of your septic system.



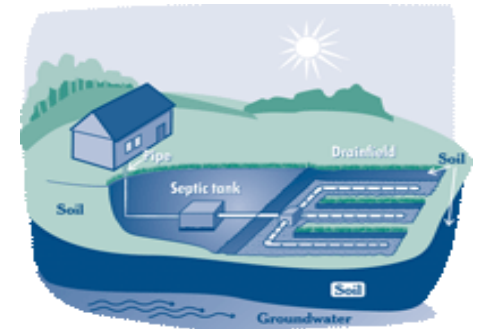
Please don't hesitate to contact the
Muscatine County Building~Zoning~Environmental Office
if you have any other questions or concerns.

EMAIL: zoning@co.muscatine.ia.us
WEBSITE: www.co.muscatine.ia.us

Office hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Monday - Friday

MUSCATINE COUNTY
BUILDING ~ ZONING ~
ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICE
3610 PARK AVENUE WEST
MUSCATINE, IA 52761

SEPTIC SYSTEM DO'S & DON'TS



563.263.0482

Septic System Do's

- **Do** keep an "as built" system diagram, permit, and related records in a safe place for reference. They will be helpful for maintenance and if any problems occur.
- **Do** keep accurate maintenance records.
- **Do** practice water conservation. By reducing the amount of water going into your system you can extend the life of the system.
- **Do** make sure to stay at least 10' away from any portion of your septic system with a deck, porch, sidewalk, building, pool, etc.

Suggestions for conserving:

- ◇ Using low flow faucets, showers, and toilet.
- ◇ Running appliances one at a time, dishwasher, washing machine, etc.
- ◇ Spreading laundry over the entire week and avoid partial loads.
- ◇ Wash only full loads of dishes and laundry.
- ◇ Taking showers instead of baths.
- ◇ Limiting shower length.
- ◇ Fixing all faucet and toilet leaks promptly.
- ◇ Turning water off while brushing, shaving, etc.



- **Do** use liquid, phosphate-free laundry detergent and no more than the recommended amount. Phosphate-free detergents help keep your drain field critters from being overfed and help prevent algae problems in nearby lakes and streams from sand filters.
- **Do** be aware that medications used in the house can have an adverse effect on the septic system. Long term use of antibiotics and chemo therapy kill bacteria in your tank.
- **Do** direct water from downspouts, roofs, streets, driveways, drains, and surface runoff away from tank and drain field. Additional water from these sources can overload your system and prevent it from working properly.
- **Do** keep all vehicles off of the septic tank and drain field areas. This prevents pipes from breaking and soil from becoming compacted. Compacted soils can't absorb water from the drain field.
- **Do** keep all lids, ports, etc. easily accessible.
- **Do** annually inspect the area over your sand filter and the discharge pipe for any signs of problems. Call our office if you see problems.
- **Do** have your septic tank pumped every 2–3 years by a certified septic pumper.

Septic System Don'ts

- **Don't** drain a bath, take a shower, wash clothes, wash dishes, etc. at the same time. Large amounts of water entering the system in a short amount of time can disrupt the tank and wash solids into the drain field.
- **Don't** ignore leaky fixtures.
- **Don't** over use the garbage disposal. A septic system repeatedly overloaded with organic solids may plug up and quit working. Compost scraps or dispose of waste of this type with your trash.
- **Don't** pour grease down your drain.
- **Don't** overuse soaps and detergents—use liquids and concentrates whenever possible. This also includes bath and body oils. Compulsive cleaning and disinfection with bleach and other antibacterial products can cause system failure because it kills the healthy organisms in your system needed to make it work properly.
- **Don't** use septic tank additives that are touted to enhance the performance of your tank. Additives do not improve the performance of the septic tank and may, in fact, damage your system. The natural microorganisms that grow in your digestive system generate their own enzymes that are sufficient for breaking down and digesting nutrients in the wastewater.