

## For Additional Information on Storm water Prevention:

Missouri Department of Natural  
Resources

<http://www.dnr.mo.gov/index.html>

Mid America Regional Council

<http://www.marc.org>

Mo-Kan Regional Council

<http://www.mo-kan.org>

Missouri State Health Department

<http://www.dhss.mo.gov/Onsite/index.html>



To report a sewage spill  
Please contact Bill Brinton  
Emergency Management  
Director of Buchanan County.  
(816) 271-1574

For emergencies, dial 911.  
The tips contained in this brochure  
provide useful information to help  
prevent water pollution. If you have  
other suggestions, please contact Mark  
Sander at Mo-Kan Regional Council  
(816)233-3144.

## Mo-Kan Regional Council

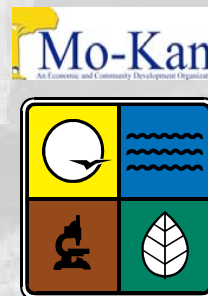
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Missouri  
Department of  
Natural  
Resources

# Helping to Prevent Water Pollution: Tips For Taking Care of Your Septic System



# Tips for your Septic System!

Households that are not served by public sewers usually depend on a septic tank system to treat and dispose of wastewater. A well designed, installed and regularly maintained septic system can provide years of reliable service. However, when these systems fail to operate properly, significant damage can occur to property and the environment. The homeowner is responsible for these damages and may be subject to fines. Therefore, it is important to follow these simple tips when using a septic tank system:

## ***Conserve Water***

The more wastewater produced, the more the soil must absorb. By conserving water, the life of your drain field will be extended and the chance of a system failure is decreased.

Reduce your water use by:

- Using water saving devices
- Repairing leaky faucets and plumbing fixtures
- Reducing toilet reservoir volume or flow
- Taking shorter showers
- Washing only full loads of dishes and laundry

## ***Never Flush Harmful Materials***

### ***Into The Septic Tank***

Grease, cooking oils, newspaper, paper towels, rags, coffee grounds, sanitary napkins and cigarettes do not easily decompose in the tank. Chemicals such as solvents, oils, paints and pesticides are harmful to the system's operation and may pollute the groundwater.

For information on the proper disposal of household hazardous waste, call **1-800-CLEANUP**.

Also, never use septic tank additives, commercial septic tank cleaners, yeast, sugar, etc. These products are not necessary and some may be harmful to your system.

## ***Protect the System from Damage***

Keep traffic, such as vehicles, heavy equipment or livestock off your drain field or replacement area. The pressure can compact the soil or damage pipes. Also, check your septic system map prior to constructing buildings or a pool on the property. The area over the absorption field and tank should be left undisturbed with only grass on top. Trees or shrubs, which may clog and damage the drain, should be cleaned from the area.

## ***Keep Runoff Away From The System***

Water from surfaces such as roofs, driveways or patios should be diverted away from the septic tank and drain field area.

## ***Keep Records***

Know where the septic tank is and have a diagram of its location. Also, keep up-to-date, accurate maintenance records.

## ***Inspect the System***

Monitor the system yearly to insure it is not at an "early warning level." Inspect the drain field and down slope areas for odors, wet spots, or surfacing of sewage. This may be an early indication of a problem with the system. Also, have the system inspected by a licensed septic tank professional every three to five years.

## ***Pump the Tank When Needed***

Routine pumping can prevent failures, such as clogging and backup into the home.

## ***Never Enter the Septic Tank***

Poisonous gases or the lack of air can be fatal. A professional should complete any work to the tank.