

SEPTIC SYSTEM REGULATIONS AND MAINTENANCE SUGGESTIONS

Pump Your Septic Tank Regularly

Septic tanks are underground concrete (or sometimes, plastic) boxes, filled with liquid, that allow solid wastes to settle out so that they don't enter your leaching area. If the level of solids in the tank becomes too high, they will enter the leaching area and plug the pores in the soil that allow the liquid to filter into the ground. If that happens, the water will either back up into the house or break out on the ground. Once the leaching area becomes clogged it will need to be replaced or extended. Adding leaching fields is far more expensive than pumping septic tanks. Regular septic tank maintenance is the single most important step you can take to extend the life of your system. Additional protective measures are listed below. Additional septic system information can be found on the supporting links.

Septic tanks should be cleaned (pumped) every 3 to 5 years, depending on their size and how heavily they are used. The Trumbull Health Department/Water Pollution Control Authority encourages home-owners to protect their septic system with regular septic tank pumping.

Septic System Do's and Don'ts

- If you use a garbage disposal, use it moderately and pump your tank annually.
- Don't put fats and oils down your drain, especially when they are hot
- Minimize use of strong cleaners and disinfectants which reduce biological activity in the tank.
- Keep diapers, cigarette butts, coffee grounds and other solids out of your septic system.
- Dispose of caustic chemicals, pesticides, oil, paint, gasoline etc. through the Town Hazardous Waste Disposal program - not in your septic system. Visit the Town website for more information <https://www.trumbull-ct.gov/446/Household-Hazardous-Waste-Collection>
- Don't allow construction, landscaping or other heavy equipment on your septic system.
- Direct roof and other storm water runoff away from your septic system.
- Don't grow large trees over your septic system.
- Minimize water usage

Health Department/WPCA Oversight: Septic Systems

1) Maintenance, Construction, Repair & Complaints

Oversight

Oversight of conventional septic systems consists of several parts: system maintenance, field investigations, new system and repair design, permitting, data collection and on-site inspection of all system installations.

Permitting & Appeals

All building permits and zoning appeals are reviewed by the Health Department to assess the impact of construction on sewage disposal needs. Guidelines for this review are part of the Connecticut Public Health Code.

Cleaning

Septic tanks should be cleaned on a regular basis, every 3-5 years. It is much less expensive to properly care for your system than to pay for its replacement when it fails. Cleaning the tank every few years is inexpensive in comparison to thousands of dollars for the repair or replacement of the leaching

system. Poorly maintained septic systems fail, causing sewage to come to the ground surface or back up into the home. Dogs, insects and even children may walk through this sewage, and thereby, transmit diseases. A sewage backup into the home is very difficult and expensive to clean up. Sewage that overflows onto the ground surface pollutes nearby streams. All streams in Trumbull eventually connect with Long Island Sound, with its beaches and shell fishing waters.

Installation

Installation of new septic systems and repairs to existing systems are by permit and must be performed by licensed installers. Design and installation criteria are part of the Connecticut Public Health Code and permits are issued based on local zoning regulations. Most repairs are motivated by failure of an existing system or by system upgrades at the time of home improvement construction. System failures are usually reported by property owners, licensed installers or by neighbors.

Investigating Failures

The Health Department investigates all reported septic system failures and property owners are notified of their obligation to repair them in a reasonable time. Each failure is entered into a database and is kept open until there has been resolution to the problem. For failures that are not repaired in a timely manner, there is a series of follow-up investigations and communications leading to issuance of a Public Health Order and court summons in worst-case scenarios.

2) Septic Permitting

[19-13 B100a Application \(for Construction of an Accessory Structure, Building Conversion, or Change in Use\) \(PDF\)](#)

Application for Soil Test Form (PDF)

Application to Construct, Alter, Repair a Septic System (PDF)

As-Built Plan Subsurface Sewage Disposal System (PDF)

Building Permit Preliminary Review Process (PDF)

<https://www.trumbull-ct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/739/Trumbull-Health-Board-Fee-Schedule-PDF?bidId=>

3) Septic Systems 101

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/Departments-and-Agencies/DPH/dph/environmental_health/environmental_engineering/pdf/SepticSystems101pdf.pdf?la=en

4) Home Buyers Guide

<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Environmental-Health/Environmental-Engineering/Home-Buyers-Guide>