

# Septic System Maintenance Checklist

Minnehaha County,  
South Dakota

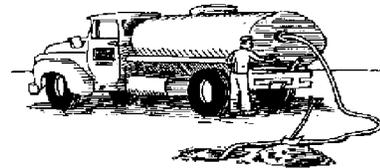
Proper septic system maintenance is essential in helping ensure that the system continues to properly treat wastewater. Follow these rules to care for your system.

Protect the septic system from damage.

- Keep vehicle traffic and parking areas (cars, trucks, tractors, or snowmobiles) off the drain field.
- Don't build any structure over the septic system.
- Don't place concrete or asphalt over the drain field.

Perform regular maintenance.

- Have the septic tank pumped every 3-5 years. Do not allow the tank contents on the surface of the ground, the contents must be taken to a treatment plant for final treatment.
- If you have a garbage disposal have the tank pumped at least once per year.
- Have a qualified professional pump the tank. The gases in the tank are both toxic and explosive.



Divert rainwater and runoff from the septic drain field area.

- A soggy drain field won't absorb and adequately treat wastewater. Grade the yard to drain water away from the drain field and direct roof gutters and basement drains away from the system.
- Do not apply excessive water to the lawn above the drain field.

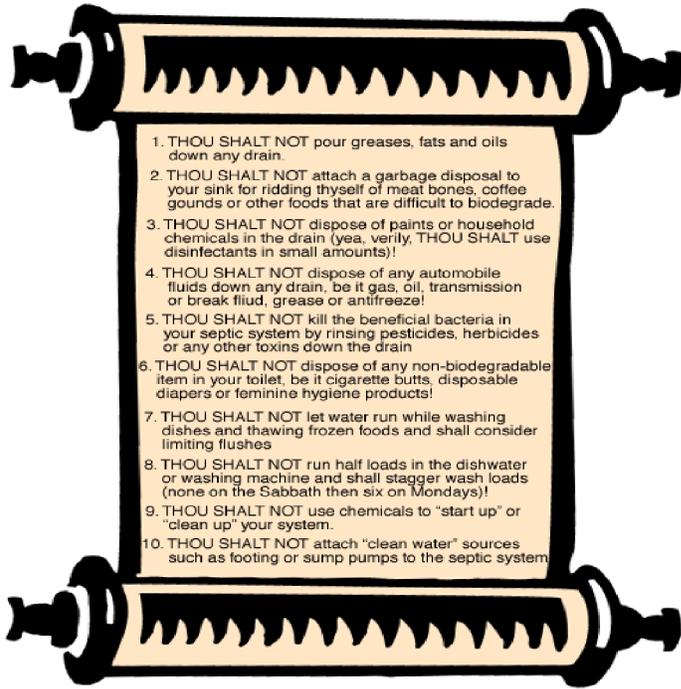


Don't overload the septic tank and drain field.

- Check faucets and toilets for leaks and repair when necessary.
- Use aerators on faucets and flow reducer nozzles on showers to lower water use.
- Reduce water levels for small loads of laundry or wash only full loads.
- Try to spread laundry chores over the week rather than all on one day.
- Wait until the dishwasher is full before you run it.
- Use low-flow appliances to reduce water use.

Keep trees and shrubs away from the septic system.

- Keep trees at least 100 feet away from the septic system to reduce damage from roots.
- Trees with aggressive root systems, such as willows or soft maples, may have to be spaced even farther from the system.
- Have only grass above the drain field.



The toilet isn't a garbage can.

- Never flush down the toilet any kitty litter, disposable diapers, sanitary napkins, tampons, condoms, paper towels, facial tissues, cigarette butts, coffee grounds or filters, plastics, dental floss or any product that will not readily break down.

If a garbage disposal is necessary, use it sparingly.

- Limit washing food scraps, coffee grounds or similar materials down the drain.

Use cleansers in moderation.

- The overuse of cleansers such as bleaches, disinfectants, anti-bacterial soaps, drain cleaners and toilet bowl cleaners can impact the number of bacteria in the system that are needed to treat the wastewater.

Do not pour grease down the drain.

- If grease reaches the absorption area it can clog the drain field.

Keep toxic or hazardous chemicals out of the system.

- Exclude anti-freeze, gasoline, paints, varnishes, paint thinners, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, photographic chemicals, oils, and waste oils.

Do not use septic system additives.

- Most additives are at the least ineffectual and in some cases can damage the septic system.

