

Managing Your Septic System

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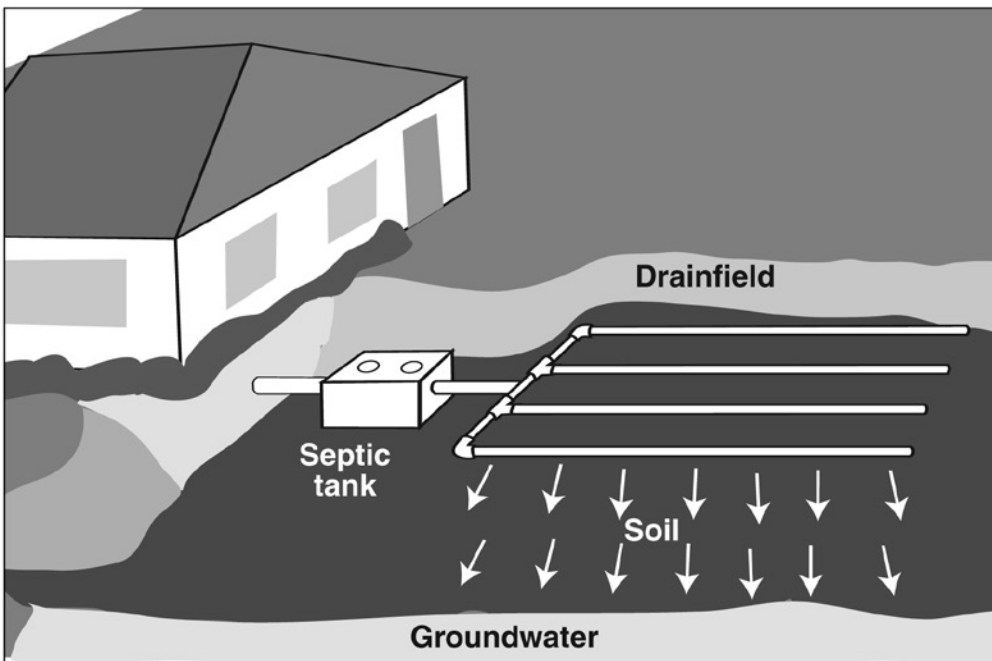
Households that are not served by public sewers usually depend on septic systems to treat and dispose of wastewater.

When Your Septic System is correctly located, adequately designed, carefully installed and properly managed, you will have a waste disposal system that is simple, economical, effective, safe and long-lasting. A failing system may result in property damage, odor,

surface and possibly groundwater pollution, disease potential, and costly repairs or replacement.

MANAGEMENT IS THE KEY TO A LASTING WASTEWATER DISPOSAL SYSTEM.

This file contains information that will help you manage your septic system. It also provides a place to record and store vital information about your system. It should be kept with other documents about your home and property.



Septic System Components

A septic system has two basic parts: a **septic tank** designed to intercept, hold and partially treat solids contained in wastewater coming from the home, and a soil absorption field or **drainfield** to facilitate treatment and dispersal of clarified wastewater after it leaves the septic tank, as illustrated at left.

Helpful Sources of Assistance and Additional Information

Questions and concerns about your septic system can be directed to the sanitarian in your county or regional health office, to a septic system contractor or to your local Michigan State University Extension office. Additional information can be found in:

On-site Domestic Sewage Disposal Handbook, MWPS-24, Midwest Plan Services; request from Department of Agricultural Engineering, Michigan State University, \$6.

Septic Tank Systems: A Homeowner's Guide, Michigan Environmental Health Association, <www.meha.net>.

So...now you own a septic system; Groundwater protection and your septic system, and several additional on-site waste disposal publications, National Small Flows Clearinghouse, <www.nsfcc.wvu.edu>.

Onsite Works! An Introduction to Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems, Housing Education and Research Center (HERC) at Michigan State University, <www.canr.msu.edu/cm/herc/onsite/index.html>.

Several bulletins on septic systems are available in Michigan State University Extension's WQ (water quality) bulletin series, including: *Home*A*Syst (WQ-51)*; *Managing Shorelines to Protect Water Quality (WQ-52)*; *What to Do if Your Septic System Fails (WQ-14)*; *Buying or Selling a Home? What To Find Out About Your Water and Septic Systems (WQ-15)*; and *How to Conserve Water in Your Home and Yard (WQ-16)*. Contact your local MSUE office or the MSU Bulletin Office, 117 Central Services Bldg., MSU, East Lansing, MI 48824-1001, or <www.msue.msu.edu/waterqual/wq-mats.html>.