

Education and Outreach for Source Protection

On-site Sewage (Septic) Systems

Audiences	Key Content
<p>Rural Landowners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most rural homes and cottages use a septic system. When working properly, septic systems can provide a safe and reliable way to treat your household wastewater. If you do not properly care for your septic system it could contaminate the environment and put your family and neighbour's health at risk. • A septic system is privately owned. You are responsible for ensuring that it is kept in good working order by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Having your septic system inspected every three years; ○ Pumping your septic tank as needed; ○ Changing effluent filters according to manufacturer instructions; ○ Replacing a damaged tank; ○ Increasing the size of your tank if sewage flow increases; ○ Putting an effluent filter on the outflow pipe leading from the tank to the leaching bed; ○ Making sure all pumps and alarms are working (if your system has them). • Regular inspections by a licensed professional should be performed at least every three years. They are important for the proper care of your sewage system and can identify ongoing or potential problems. Inspections can help to ensure a long, useful lifespan for your sewage system, benefitting you and protecting your community's drinking water. In some areas of the province, maintenance inspections are mandatory. Contact your municipality to find out who enforces septic system requirements in your area. • Part of caring for your septic system is being careful about what goes into your system. Avoid putting hazardous household waste, such as paint, grease, laundry detergent

	<p>with phosphates and nail polish remover down your drain. They can damage your septic system and seep into ground water through your leaching bed. Keep items such as dental floss, feminine hygiene products and food solids out of your system. They can build up and clog your leaching bed and pipes.</p>
--	---

RESOURCES

Using the resources below you can find information on septic systems and how they work, how to care for your septic system; and how to identify problems with your septic system.

SEPTIC SYSTEMS	
Link Author Date Published Notes	<u>Septic Systems</u> Conservation Ontario August 2011 Practical information about septic systems, how they work, how to take care of them, and what to do if there is a problem.
SEPTIC SMART	
Link Author Date Published Notes	<u>Septic Smart</u> Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs N/A A comprehensive program including videos and printed materials explaining how and why to take care of septic systems.
YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM: PROTECTING YOUR INVESTMENT AND THE ENVIRONMENT	
Link Author Date Published Notes	<u>Your Septic System: Protecting Your Investment and the Environment</u> Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change February 2015 Information about septic systems, how they work, how to take care of them, and what to do if there is a problem. Includes information about inspection programs. Available as a brochure and in a text-only version.

OTHER INFORMATION

- Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
 - Ontario Building Code
- Ontario Rural Wastewater Centre
- Your local Conservation Authority, Health Unit or Building Department

For inquiries about this information sheet contact:

Chris MacLean, Senior Advisor Stakeholder Relations
Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
3rd floor, 40 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, ON M4V 1L5
416-212-1334

Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
Public Information Centre
2nd Floor, Macdonald Block, 900 Bay Street, Suite M2-22
Toronto, ON M7A 1N3
Tel: 416-325-4164; Toll-free: 1-800-565-4923; TTY 1-855-515-2759

The contents of this information sheet are provided for informational purposes only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations in any circumstances. Some of the material on this information sheet has been obtained from sources other than the Government of Ontario. The Government of Ontario cannot and does not guarantee that the information on this information sheet is current, accurate, complete or free of errors. Any reliance upon any information provided on this information sheet is solely at the risk of the user. The user may choose to refer directly to the publications listed in this information sheet for further, more complete information on the topic area. The linking to other publications does not imply on the part of the Government of Ontario any endorsement or guarantee of any of the organizations or information (including the right to display such information) found on their respective web sites. These linked Web sites/publications may or may not be available in French.