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Simple Guide to Looking After your Septic Tank/Treatment Plant

Septic tanks/treatment plants work by natural bacteria digesting and breaking down the material you flush away. The waste goes into a tank underground and then on into a drainage field.

Only if your system discharges close to a stream or ditch will you need to have a treatment plant installed (regulations brought in 2020).

There are things you can do to help your system to continue to work well.

Think about what you are flushing down into your tank.

Before you put anything into your drain (either via a sink or toilet) you do need to think about if it will stop the natural process in your tank from working.

Your system is not a bin. Avoid putting into the drains anything that won't breakdown (eg wipes, sanitary products etc). Chemicals, oils, even fat from the kitchen could damage the bacteria and stop the process working.

Some cleaning products are specially suited to septic tanks and won't kill off the useful bacteria, but use all products sparingly & try to stick to the same products if you can (as your system will get used to dealing with what you use and be more efficient – chopping and changing all the time can cause imbalances).

Think about the amount you are flushing into your tank.

We all use much more water at home than was the case 20 years or so ago, power showers, washing machines, dishwashers and pressure washers add to the use!

The bacteria in your system can only deal with a set amount of fluid/waste at any one time too much and the system becomes overloaded and won't cope so well.

Try and space out the amount of times your washing machine is on to allow your system time to recover for example.

Regular maintenance

While the bacteria does a great job of breaking down your waste into a smaller volume, all tanks still need to be emptied regularly (when to empty will depend on the volume of waste you create (ie number of people etc)). For most systems an annual empty is enough.

Treatment plants have parts that need to be serviced to ensure they continue to work efficiently.

General home maintenance, like repairing any leaks to taps & toilets will also help as this reduces the amount of liquid that goes into your system.

If you don't maintain/empty your tank it can result in the system failing, potentially backing up and flooding your property with the raw contents.

You can count on us"

Kevin Wendt
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