Responsibilities

Your Septic System

Household Hazards for Common Substitutes for Common

Dos and Don'ts
Care and maintenance of your Individual Sewage Disposal System.

You, the homeowner, are responsible for the care and maintenance of your Individual Sewage Disposal System (ISDS). With reasonable use and periodic maintenance, your system should last a long time. Here are seven things you should do to insure your system remains in good working order:

1. Do regular pumping of the septage from the septic tank.
2. Locate the tank riser (septic tank lid) and keep it marked.
3. Understand how the system operates, including knowing what the minimum maintenance requirements are for your particular design.
4. Respond to a failing system with required maintenance, particularly when surfacing of effluent occurs or odors are apparent.
5. Do not dispose of hazardous household wastes in the septic system.
6. Recognize the value to the property by having a well-maintained system.
7. Keep records of the system design, location and maintenance activities (including pumping dates.)

The Septic Tank

The function of a septic tank is to separate solids and liquids in sewage. This is primarily a physical process of settling, although a considerable amount of biological decomposition does occur.

When wastes enter the first compartment of a septic tank, solids settle to the bottom and form sludge. Grease and hair float to the top and become a layer of scum. The middle layer, mostly liquid, flows into the second compartment where the process repeats itself. Finally, the remaining liquid goes into the leach (absorption) field.

Although it is an unpleasant task, a yearly inspection of the solid accumulation is the only way to determine when a tank needs pumping. CAUTION: DO NOT ENTER THE TANK AT ANY TIME. SEPTIC TANKS CONTAIN GASES WHICH CAN BE FATAL IF INHALED.

- First, locate and remove the lid to the first compartment of the tank.
- Second, make a hole in the scum layer so you have access to the liquid below.
- Third, cover a long stick with a rough, white cloth and lower it into the bottom of the tank.

Pull the stick straight out. You will see two distinct discolorations on the cloth. The lowest will be the sludge line and the other the total capacity of the tank. The sludge line should be no more than 1/3 of the total capacity of the tank. If more than 1/3, the tank should be pumped. A list of licensed septic pumpers is available at the Borough Office: 610-749-2726. Be sure to dig up both tank lids so the pumper can pump each compartment.

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