



Care and Maintenance of your Leach Line Sewage Treatment System

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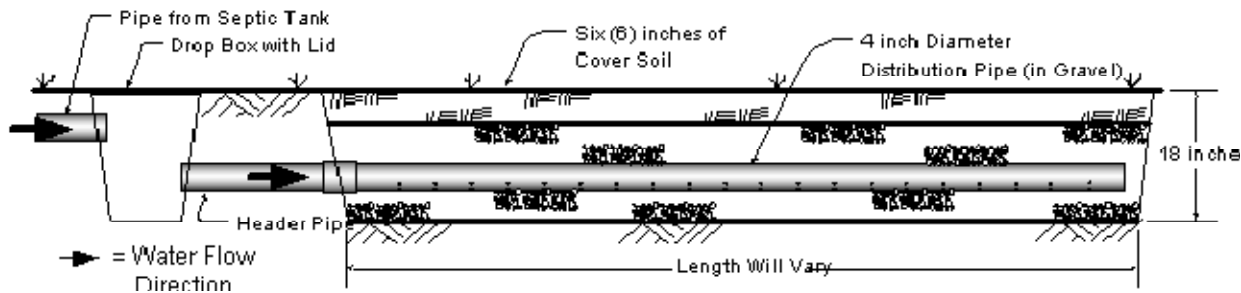
Your system includes:

- ✓ a clean-out, inside or outside the basement wall
- ✓ a building sewer to convey wastewater from the house
- ✓ a septic tank
- ✓ connecting pipelines
- ✓ leach lines (with gravel, or with gravel less devices)
- ✓ some type of distribution device(s): drop boxes (for serial distribution), a distribution (splitter) box, or earthen dams

Your system may also include:

- a septic tank effluent filter
- a dosing tank with a pump
- a dosing tank high water alarm
- a curtain (gradient) drain with a gravity outlet
- a curtain (gradient) drain with a collection sump and pump
- electrical safety device for pumps (breaker lock-out or disconnect box)

This type of system depends on the ability of the soil to absorb and treat wastewater. A properly maintained septic tank will prepare normal household wastewater for distribution to leach lines. After the septic tank effluent reaches the leach lines, the qualities of the surrounding soil determine the quality of the treatment process.



Tank Care: Live bacteria in the septic tank provide biological treatment. Keep products harmful to bacteria out of the tank. Antibacterial soaps and disinfectant cleaners, excessive bleach, antibiotics, pesticides and poisons, drain cleaners, solvents, and automobile fluids are examples of harmful products. Chemotherapy and radiation therapy products may also kill bacteria in the tank. Dead tank bacteria provide no treatment, resulting in little settling of suspended solids, rapid accumulation of sludge, and higher maintenance costs. A dead tank will cause the system to clog and fail if the condition is not corrected in time.

An in-sink garbage disposal is not recommended and, if used, will require more frequent septic tank pumping. Dispose of fats, oils and grease with your solid trash. **Avoid additives and products that claim to dissolve tank solids.** Keep non-soluble wastes, such as plastics and cigarette butts, pet wastes, cat litter, paint, construction and cleaning wastes out of your septic system. Also avoid disposing of paper products with the exception of toilet paper approved for septic tanks. **The General Rule is: Don't put anything into your septic system that has not gone through your body first.**

MAINTENANCE TIPS

1. Have your septic tank pumped out by a registered septage hauler every 3 to 5 years, or as needed (see attached guidance for tank maintenance and pumping schedules). Septic tank risers (properly located and sealed to the tank) and lids simplify access to the tank for inspection and service. If your tank doesn't have an access riser, installing one is recommended. A riser should extend high enough above the ground surface to allow soil to be placed around it and sloped away to keep surface water from ponding. Install a child-proof lid.

Keep a record of pumping and other maintenance.

2. If your system has a dosing tank with a pump and a high water alarm, or a curtain (gradient) drain collection sump with a pump, they need to be checked routinely. Check for pump operation and test the high water alarm. Check the pump circuit breakers (which should be marked). Check the condition of the wiring and connections near the pumps. Replacements or repairs should be done by a qualified person and inspected by the Clermont County Building Department for proper electrical grounding.

3. **Do not overload your leach line system with extra water. Water conservation is a must.** Repair any leaking faucets or toilets. Use water saving appliances and fixtures. Take short showers and spread doing your laundry throughout the week to avoid overloading the system.

4. Divert surface and ground water away from your system. This includes roof drains, footer tiles and sump pump discharges. Eliminate standing water over the leach lines by filling in low spots when the ground is dry. Surface and ground water will add to the load on the system. Maintain curtain (gradient) drain outlets to carry excess water away.

5. Keep a good stand of grass over your leach lines and mow the area regularly during the growing season. Trees should not be planted directly over the system.

6. **To protect your system from damage:** Replace any broken or missing lids. Don't drive or park over any part of the system; don't construct driveways or structures over the system or in the system replacement area; don't plant gardens, don't allow bushes or trees to grow on septic tank or over the leach lines; don't allow livestock to graze or pets to dig in the system area. Don't excavate near your system without first verifying that it is safe. Request an inspection by the Health District before you begin work on any improvement such as a room addition, in-ground pool, barn or garage.

7. **Signs of failure:** Sewage on surface of ground. Slow toilets or drains, sewage backup into the house, or strong sewage odors inside or outside indicate problems with your system. Call a reputable onsite wastewater professional.

Sewage surfacing in your yard or flowing to a nearby drainage way is a sure sign of leach line failure and is considered a **public health nuisance**. These conditions must be corrected to prevent a health threat to your family and neighbors.

8. **Resting Leach Lines:** Leach lines can be rested a year and renovated by blocking the flow of sewage to them. A plug in the header pipe, in a distribution box or drop box, cuts the leach line off from the system. This same method can dry up a leach line that bleeds sewage out to the ground surface. Leach line systems now being installed in Clermont County have drop boxes with lids to grade for each line. This eases inspection of the system and provides access for plugging individual leach lines as described above.

PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT: Proper care and routine maintenance of your system will extend its useful life.