



Care and Maintenance of your Subsurface Sand Filter

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This type of wastewater system depends upon a biological process that occurs in the sand layer of the filter bed (See Figure 1 for filter bed diagram). The treatment occurs as wastewater trickles through the sand, contacting the bacteria film which forms on the surface of the sand grains. When wastewater from a septic tank passes through a properly operating sandfilter, the treated water appears to be clear and odorless.

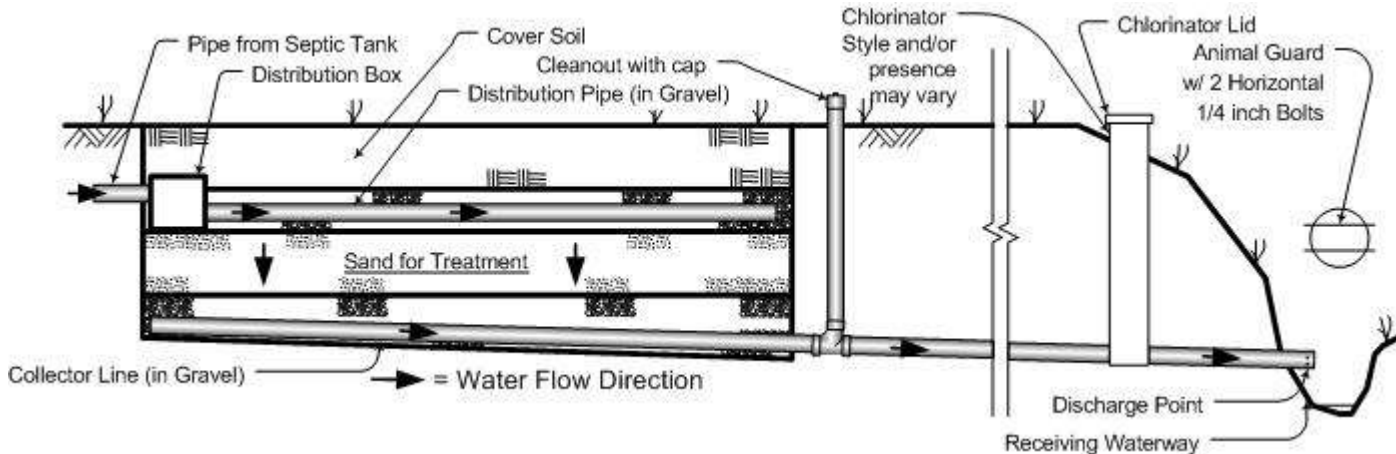


Figure1-Sand Filter Bed

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:

Have your 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 and sloped away, to keep surface water from ponding. Keep a record of pumping and other maintenance.

Your system may have a dosing tank with a pump inside and a high water alarm. These 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 pump. Replacement or repairs, as well as checking for proper grounding, should be done by a qualified person and may require an inspection by the Clermont County Building Department.

Practice water conservation to reduce the amount of wastewater that must be treated and discharged to the environment. Repair leaky faucets and toilets. Use water saving appliances and devices, such as faucets, shower heads and toilets. Take short showers and spread doing laundry throughout the week to avoid overloading the system.

It is important to regularly check your sandfilter discharge area. The end of the discharge pipe should have an animal guard (See Figure 1) and must be clear of any silt, debris or roots which may block flow. There should be at least 6 inches between the bottom of this pipe and the receiving waterway. The waterway should be maintained such that discharged water will flow freely down the waterway. Maintain at least a 6 foot pathway from the end of the filter bed to the discharge location to allow easy access. Do not allow trees and bushes to grow over the top of the sandfilter bed or discharge pipe.

All of the cleanout lids should be inspected for any damage. Any missing or damaged lids or fittings require replacement. The cleanouts should be maintained so that they are visible.

Do not drive heavy equipment on the septic tank or the sandfilter.

PLEASE NOTE: An operating Subsurface Sandfilter Sewage Treatment System does not eliminate all disease causing organisms; it merely reduces them. **Children and pets should be kept away from the discharge area.**

Use of a Chlorinator – Safety Tips

Sand filters installed between 1988 and 2002 have a chlorinator following the sandfilter bed. The chlorinator provides disinfection of the treated effluent. Chlorine tablets can be obtained from various distributors. Be sure to obtain the proper tablets for your unit. **Use of swimming pool chlorine products in the treatment of wastewater is a violation of federal law.** Pool chemicals resist degradation by sunlight, allowing the chlorine residual to persist longer in downstream waters, possibly upsetting the balance of the aquatic environment.

You should check your chlorinator at least once a month. When restocking your chlorinator, it is recommended that only a few tablets be added at a time to prevent clogging. Read the information you receive from the product distributor about the safety and proper handling of chlorine tablets. Store extra tablets in the original watertight container away from children and pets. If your chlorinator is in an access well, avoid breathing any fumes when servicing your unit.