

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR OPERATING YOUR ON-SITE SEPTIC SYSTEM

We ask that all District members take steps to avoid putting anything into their septic tanks that might prove to be detrimental to the system. To help us maintain a healthy system, and help members make correct decisions about disposal into the system the following information is provided. Those members renting their homes or facilities please share this information with your tenants or guests. People unfamiliar with septic tank treatment can make poor choices in the use of the systems.

DO'S

- **Familiarize yourself with the location of the septic system electrical control panel.**
- **Call 360-468-2724 or 360-468-2131 immediately, whenever the alarm comes on and leave a message if necessary.** The audible alarm can be silenced by pushing the lighted button on the front (or bottom on older systems) of the control panel. **DO leave power to the septic system on.** **DO** reduce water use in an alarm situation. With minimum use, the tank has a reserve storage capacity for 24 hours before ponding or backup.
- **Collect grease for disposal in the trash.**
- **Use trash can or compost bin for disposal of food scraps.**
- **Choose liquid detergents** without chlorine or phosphates or use soap flakes with washing soda.
- **Repair leaky plumbing fixtures.**
- **Conserve water:** take shorter showers, use less bath water, wash full loads of cloths or dishes, and use water saving fixtures.
- **Use environmentally friendly household products** - for example: Ecover, Oasis, Seventh Generation, Earth Friendly, Biokleen, Lifetree, and Planet.
- **Use dryer sheet type fabric softeners** (or use liquid softeners on a facecloth in your dryer)
- **Use landfill** to dispose of personal products, pharmaceuticals, kitty litter, coffee grounds, wrappers, dental floss and large amounts of hair.
- **Use hazardous waste collections** for paint, thinners, pesticides, herbicides and any other toxic materials.

DON'TS

- **Use excessive quantities of water.** Large amounts of water flowing into a septic tank in short time reduces its ability to breakdown and settle solids and can clog your pump. Don't wash multiple loads of laundry, one right after another. Don't let water run unnecessarily while washing hands, food, teeth, dishes, etc.
- **Use septic tank additives.** They are **NOT** necessary and can harm the septic tank process.
- **Use Drano:** twelve (12) grams will kill all the bacteria in a 1,000 gallon tank!
- **Use liquid fabric softeners in the wash.**
- **Flush or drain dangerous or damaging substances** including pharmaceuticals, water softener backwash, excessive amounts of bath or body oils, flammable or toxic products, floor wax and rug cleaners, spa products, pesticides, herbicides, paints, thinners
- **Leave water running to prevent freeze damage,** rather insulate or drain plumbing
- **Turn off your septic system at the control panel or at your electrical panel when your home or business is vacant.** The system may need to operate to discharge accumulated ground water or plumbing seepage. Inspection, maintenance, or repair require the system to be powered. **NOTE:** In a power outage situation, continued use of water, if it's available without power, will overflow the tank or cause backups. The system needs power to discharge.

SUBSTITUTES FOR HAZARDOUS HOUSEHOLD PRODUCTS

The hazardous cleaners are listed in bold face, followed by the suggested friendly substitute.

AMMONIA-BASED CLEANERS: Sprinkle Baking Soda on a damp sponge. For windows, use a solution of 2 Tbs. WHITE Vinegar to 1 qt. Water. Place the mixture into a spray bottle.

DISINFECTANTS: Use Borax: ½ cup in a gallon water; deodorizes also.

DRAIN DELOGGERS: Use a Plunger or Metal Snake, or remove and clean trap.

SCOURING CLEANERS & POWDERS: Sprinkle Baking Soda on a damp sponge or add 4 Tbs. Baking Soda to 1 qt. Warm water or use Bon Ami. It's cheaper and won't scratch.

CARPET/UPHOLSTERY CLEANERS: Sprinkle Dry Cornstarch or Baking Soda on, then vacuum. For tougher stains, blot with White Vinegar in soapy water.

TOILET CLEANERS: Sprinkle on Baking Soda or Bon Ami, then scrub with a toilet brush.

FURNITURE/FLOOR POLISHES: To clean, use Oil Soap and warm water. Dry with soft cloth. Polish with 1 part Lemon Juice to 2 parts Oil (any kind), or use natural products with Lemon Oil or Beeswax in Mineral Oil.

METAL CLEANERS: Brass and copper: scrub with a used half of Lemon dipped in Salt. Stainless steel: use Scouring Pad and Soapy Water. Silver: rub gently with Toothpaste and soft wet cloth.

OVEN CLEANERS: Quickly sprinkle Salt on drips, then scrub. Use Baking Soda and Scouring Pads on older spills.

LAUNDRY DETERGENT: Choose one with zero phosphate content or use Soap Flakes with 1/3 cup of Washing Soda. (Before switching, wash clothes in pure washing soda to remove detergent residues.) Use liquid detergents instead of powdered.

- Many "friendlier" substitute products available from companies like Ecover, Oasis, Seventh Generation, Earth Friendly, Biokleen, Lifetree, and Planet.

Disposal of Pharmaceuticals is best accomplished by adding water to pills or capsules in their original containers with labels removed and by adding flour or cat litter to liquids. The containers then can be bagged or put in yogurt tubs for disposal as landfill. These procedures are an alternative to flushing which is very undesirable to our system and the environment. Many medications are not broken down in the biological treatment process and can harm its microbiology and pass through to the environment, its surface and ground waters.