

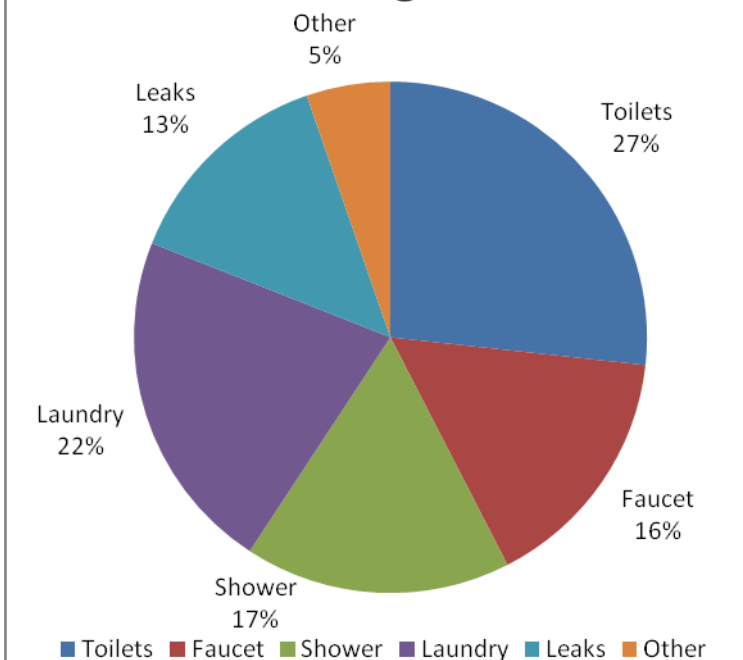
MAINTAINING YOUR ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM-Drain Field

DO

DON'T

Do obtain necessary permits	Don't go down into a septic tank
Do use professional certified installers	Don't allow anyone to drive or park over any part of the system
Do have your septic tank accessible for inspections and plumbing. Install risers if necessary.	Don't plant anything over or near the lateral field except grass. Even roots from nearby trees or shrubs may clog and damage the drain lines.
Do have your septic tank inspected annually. Do have your well tested annually (if a private well). Contact your local health department.	Don't use your septic system as a trash can. Plastics, cat box litter, cigarette filters, condoms, tampons, sanitary napkins, paper towels, and facial tissues should not be disposed of in your toilets. These items quickly fill up your septic tank with solids, decrease its efficiency, and will require you to pump out the tank more frequently. They could also clog the sewer line to the septic tank, causing wastewater to pack up into your home.
Do keep a detailed record of repairs, pumping, inspections, permits issued, and other maintenance activities.	Don't dig in your lateral field or build anything over it, and don't cover the lateral field with a hard surface such as concrete or asphalt.
Do conserve water to avoid overloading the system. Repair any leaky faucets or toilets	Don't pour into drains: septic tank additives, chemical drain openers, paint, varnishes, thinners, waste oil, photographic solutions, pesticides and other organic chemicals.
Do divert other sources of water, like roof drains, house footing drains, and sump pumps away from the lateral fields.	Don't allow backwash from your home water softener to enter the system system.
Do establish and maintain a good stand of grass over the lateral field	

National Average Water Use



One of the best things you can do for your septic system is to reduce the amount of water flowing into it. This is especially important if the soil on your lot does not readily absorb water.

A typical family of four used 250-300 gallons of water every day; you can reduce this figure with simple conservation measures.

- Repair leaking faucets or running toilets
- Use clothes and dish washers only when full.
- Reduce length of showers and lower water levels in baths.
- Turn off unneeded water when washing hands and brushing teeth.
- Install water saver fittings in faucets and shower heads.

MAINTAINING YOUR ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM-Lagoon

Do obtain necessary permits	Don't go down into a septic tank for any reason. Toxic gases in the tank can be explosive and can cause asphyxiation.
Do use professional certified installers	Don't allow anyone to drive or park over any part of the system.
Do keep your septic tank accessible for pumping and adjustment. Install risers if necessary. The covers should be locked or of sufficient weight to prevent a child from lifting them.	Don't allow the overflow from the lagoon to leave your property, even during wet weather. A grass cover will not only prevent erosion, but will help dispose of excess water.
Do have your septic tank inspected annually and tank pumped out every 2 to 5 years by a professional contractor.	Don't plant trees or shrubbery near the lagoon. This could cause shading, sludge buildup and increased odor levels. Decaying vegetation can lead to voids in lagoon berm and promote berm leakage.
Do keep a detailed record of repairs, pumping, inspections, permits issued and other maintenance activities	Don't make or allow repairs to your lagoon system without obtaining the necessary permits.
Do conserve water to avoid overloading the system. Repair dripping faucets and leaking toilets; avoid long showers and run washing machines and dishwashers only when full. Use water-saving features in faucets, shower heads and toilets.	Don't pour into drains any grease, cooking fats, chemical drain openers, paint, varnishes, solvents, fuels, waste oil, photographic solutions, pesticides, pharmaceuticals or other organic chemicals. These materials can upset the bacterial action in the septic tank or lagoon and pollute groundwater.
Do divert other sources of water, like roof drains, house footing drains, and sump pump outlets, and driveway and hillside runoff away from the lagoon system. Use curtain drains, terraces, downspout extensions, retaining walls, etc. to divert water.	Don't use your toilet for trash as a trash can. Keep out coffee grounds, bones, cigarette butts, disposable diapers, feminine hygiene products, paper towels, facial tissues and other materials that decompose very slowly.
Do take leftover hazardous household chemicals to an approved hazardous waste collection center for disposal. Use bleach, disinfectants and a drain and toilet bowl cleaners sparingly and in accordance with product labels.	Don't add enzyme or yeast additives to the septic tank or lagoon in hopes of improving bacterial action. None have been proven beneficial and some actually cause damage to soil and vegetation and may pollute groundwater
Do remove vegetation growing in lagoon. Trees, shrubs, cattails, and weeds reduce the capacity of the lagoon which can reduce quality of treatment.	
Do maintain a 4" fence around lagoon with a gate opening of at least 36".	

WHY MAINTAIN YOUR SYSTEM

The first and most important reason to maintain your system is to protect the health of your family, your community and the environment. Untreated wastewater from a failing system can contaminate nearby wells, groundwater and drinking water sources.

Significant health risks include hepatitis A, diarrhea, salmonella, giardiasis, tetanus, hookworm, cholera, dysentery, typhoid fever and staphylococcal infections.

The second reason is money. Failing systems are expensive to repair or replace, and poor maintenance is a common cause of premature system failure. Routine prevention maintenance costs very little compared to a system replacement. For example, a system inspection and maintenance, including pumping the tanks, costs from \$150-300 (national average). In contrast, replacing a failing system with a new one typically costs from \$4,500 to \$30,000 (national average), assuming you have enough property to install the replacement system. In addition, property values may drop when a system fails.

The third reason is lack of alternatives. A lagoon system was specified for your building location because of some limiting factor(s) in the soil or space constraints. You need to care for the system to keep it operating because there may not be any other legal and healthy ways to handle sewage at your location.

Information gathered from Watershed Center Springfield MO, American Water Works Association Research Foundation and National Small Flows Clearinghouse West Virginia University