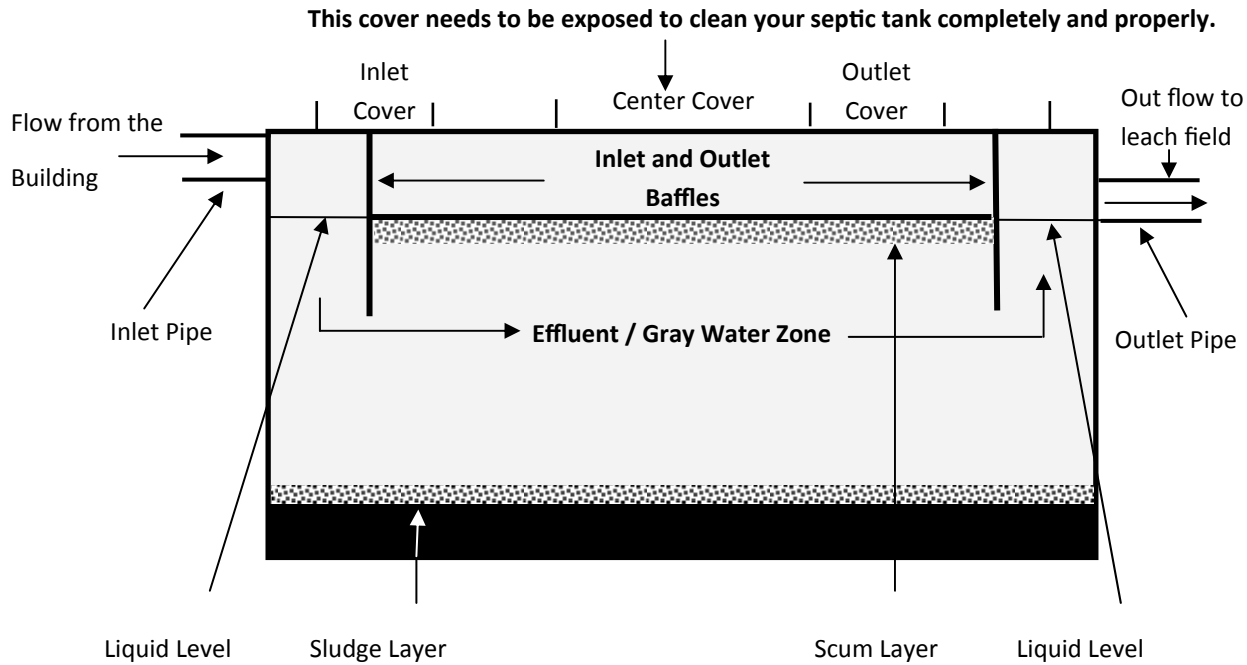


# Know Your Septic System



This is a 1,000 gallon concrete septic tank in normal working order.  
Dimensions of the septic tank are roughly 4 feet wide x 8 feet long x 4 feet deep.



**TOWN OF COLCHESTER**

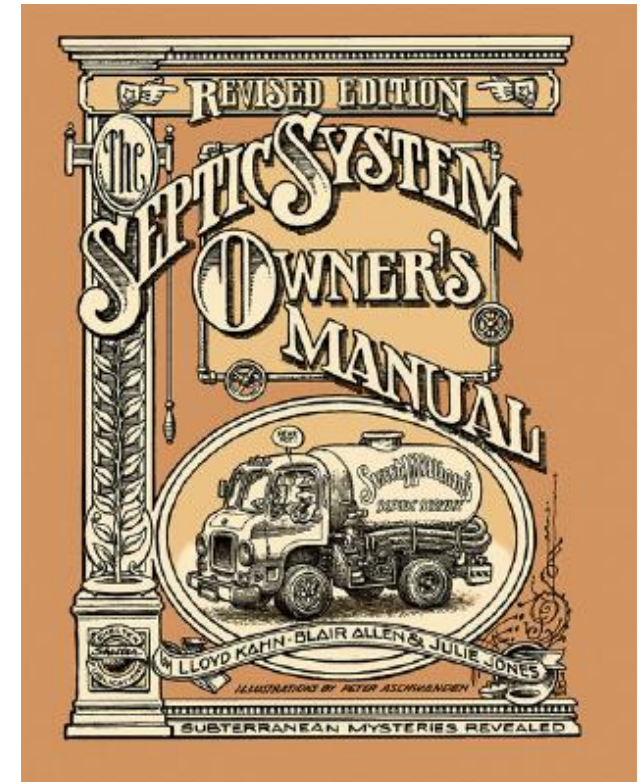
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TOWN OF COLCHESTER

Department of Planning and Zoning

# How to Care for Your Septic System





Repair any leaks.






## How to Care For Your Septic System








Some additives will do more harm than good.







### Do

-  Be conservative with the amount of water being used, such as for showers and laundry. Limit the use of antibacterial soap.
-  Space loads of laundry so that you are not running one load after another. A top loading washer at full capacity uses about 35-50 gallons per load.
-  Repair leaking faucets or toilets. “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” was never more true than it is with your septic system.  
Have your tank cleaned regularly, every 3-5 years. Typically a 1000 gallon tank for a home of up to 4 bedrooms handles 150-300 gallons per day.  
Keep heavy vehicles and equipment away from the septic tank and leach field.  
Have your septic tank cleaned by an experienced and professional septic company. There is a right way and a wrong way to clean your septic tank.  
Know where your septic tank and leach field are located and how the septic tank works.  
Heavy toilet paper is not good for septic systems. Some break down better than others  
Install a tank filter on the outlet side of your septic tank. (Zabel Filters)

### Don't

-  Garbage disposals are not recommended for homes with a septic system. The finely chopped food will not settle properly in the septic tank. It will float out to your leach field, causing damage.
-  Bacteria additives such as yeast and RiD-X are not needed to keep your septic system working properly. Yeast will break down only starches. Some additives will do more harm than good.
-  Don't overuse cleaning chemicals, including bleach and drain cleaner. These are hard for the bacteria to break down.
-  Above ground swimming pools should not be installed near or above your septic tank or leach field.
-  Non-biodegradable items, such as feminine hygiene products, condoms, cigarette butts and baby wipes, should not be flushed into your septic system.
-  Engine oil, gas, turpentine, or any other chemicals that are not biodegradable should not be poured down the drain! These will kill the bacteria in your septic tank.
-  Self-cleaning water softeners should not back flush/empty into the septic tank. This will add sulfides and chlorides to the septic system that will kill good bacteria.

-  Your septic tank performs a number of jobs, but most importantly it is a filter. It traps the solids that either float and become the scum layer or sink to become the sludge layer, then allows what is called “gray water” to flow out of the septic tank and be absorbed in the septic leach field.
-  If the liquid level is above the outlet pipe it could be a sign of septic leach field failure, especially if there is water flowing back into the septic tank from the leach field while the tank is being cleaned.
-  The outlet pipe should remain dry at all times, unless there is water being introduced into the septic tank from the building. For example, 5 gallons of water flowing into the tank from the building will equal 5 gallons of gray water flowing out to the septic leach field from the tank.
-  On average, septic tanks should be cleaned every 3-5 years with a normal household of 2-5 adults, depending on use and amount of solids in the tank. Having your tank cleaned is necessary preventative maintenance.