

## WHAT IS A SEPTIC SYSTEM?

A septic system is an underground wastewater treatment structure that uses a combination of natural processes and time-tested technology to treat wastewater from household plumbing such as the bathroom, kitchen, and laundry room.



## WHY MAINTAIN YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM?

### *Keeps you and your neighbors healthy*

A properly maintained septic system removes bacteria, viruses, and pollutants from your household wastewater, which prevents contamination and the spread of disease to humans and animals through surface water and groundwater.

### *Saves you money*

The cost of regular septic maintenance is significantly less than repairing or replacing a faulty septic system:

Regular septic maintenance  
**\$250-\$500** every 3-5 years



Repair or replace septic  
**\$3,000-\$20,000**

### *Protects your property value*

Malfunctioning septic systems reduce property values and can hamper the sale of your home.

## WE'RE A *GROUNDWATER GUARDIAN* COMMUNITY

Because most of Springfield's drinking water comes from underground wells, **Springfield Utility Board, Rainbow Water District**, and the **City of Springfield** work together with **Springfield property owners** and The Groundwater Foundation's **Groundwater Guardian** program to protect our important water resources.

The regular maintenance of your septic system contributes to our Groundwater Guardian commitment by preventing bacteria, nutrients, and other pollutants from entering our drinking water wells and our waterways.



**GROUNDWATER GUARDIAN**

**You!**  
(every property owner with a septic system)



## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### *Oregon Dept. Environmental Quality*

Onsite Wastewater Management Program:  
[oregon.gov/deq/Residential/Pages/Onsite.aspx](http://oregon.gov/deq/Residential/Pages/Onsite.aspx)

### *Environmental Protection Agency*

SepticSmart Homeowners:  
[epa.gov/septic/septic-smart-homeowners](http://epa.gov/septic/septic-smart-homeowners)

### *Loans for failing septic systems*

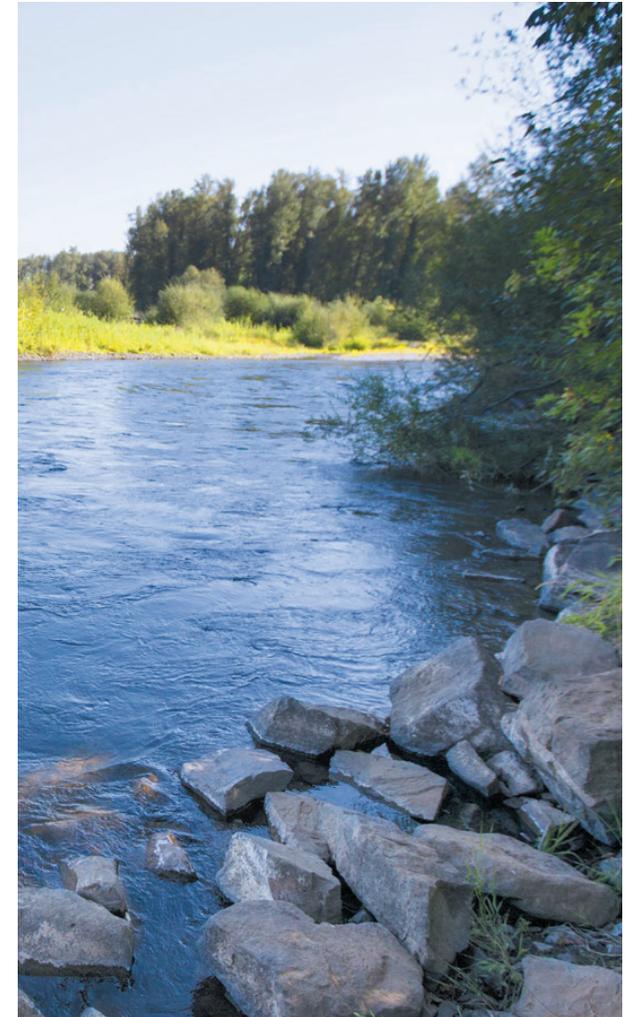
Loans are available through a partnership of the nonprofit lender Craft3 and the Oregon DEQ:  
888.231.2170 ext. 125  
[CleanWater@craft3.org](mailto:CleanWater@craft3.org)  
[Craft3.org/CleanWater0re](http://Craft3.org/CleanWater0re)



For more info, contact the Stormwater Team  
[SpringfieldStreams.org](http://SpringfieldStreams.org), 541.726.3694  
[WaterResources@springfield-or.gov](mailto:WaterResources@springfield-or.gov)

## Property Owner's Guide to **SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE**

*Maintaining your septic system avoids costly repairs and helps keep the McKenzie and Willamette Rivers clean.*



From the Stormwater Team  
Development & Public Works Dept.  
City of Springfield, Oregon

# HOW DOES A SEPTIC SYSTEM WORK?

The solid material in wastewater settles in the tank and is stored there until it is pumped. The effluent (liquid) passes from the tank to the drainfield where it is absorbed into the ground and cleaned by soil organisms. Without proper care, pollutants could move through soil and into the groundwater supply.



1) SEPTIC TANK

2) DRAINFIELD

3) SOIL

4) GROUNDWATER

### To locate your drainfield:

- **Look for changes in the lawn** such as depressions, mounds, or stripes.
- **Check property records** for an as-built drawing at [apps.lanecounty.org/LMDPro/](https://apps.lanecounty.org/LMDPro/).
- **Contact Lane County On-Site Wastewater** at 541.682.3754. The county regulates your septic system.
- **Contact a licensed septic professional.**

# RECOMMENDED SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

- **Pump your tank** to remove solids about every three to five years. The frequency depends on the size of the tank and number of people in the household (see table at bottom left).
- **Conserve water and avoid using a garbage disposal** and your tank will need to be pumped less often.
- **Use septic-safe toilet paper** that dissolves quickly.
- **Practice proper disposal.** Keep harsh chemicals, oil, grease, and pharmaceuticals out of your drains. They may kill the beneficial bacteria in your system, cause clogs, and pollute groundwater.
- **Keep accurate records** of your septic system including the design, installation, location, inspections, pump-outs, and repairs.
- **Cover the drainfield with grass** to prevent erosion and don't plant trees or shrubs nearby because roots can clog the system. Don't drive, build, or pave over the tank or drainfield.
- **Inspect your system at least once a year** for obvious signs of damage from the tank to the drainfield. If unsure, hire a licensed professional.
- **Watch for signs of failure** such as wetness or pooling over the drainfield, a backup of sewage inside the house, or a strong odor.

### SEPTIC TANK PUMPING FREQUENCY

Tank Size	1 Person	2 People	3 People	4 People	5 People	6 People
1,000 gal.	6 yrs	6 yrs	4 yrs	3 yrs	2 yrs	2 yrs
1,250 gal.	8 yrs	8 yrs	5 yrs	3 yrs	3 yrs	3 yrs
1,500 gal.	9 yrs	9 yrs	6 yrs	4 yrs	3 yrs	3 yrs

NOTE: Pumping frequencies are approximate. SOURCE: LCOG & OSU Extension Service.

# HOW OFTEN DO I SERVICE MY SEPTIC TANK?

How often your tank needs to be inspected and pumped depends on the size of the tank and the number of people using it. Regular maintenance is the key to preventing failure and costly repairs.

Hire a septic tank pumper licensed by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality: [oregon.gov/deq/Residential/Pages/Onsite.aspx](https://oregon.gov/deq/Residential/Pages/Onsite.aspx).