

The Do's and Don'ts

Do's (cont'd)

- Practice water conservation and limit the number of high water use activities done consecutively or at the same time. For example, spread out laundry washings over the week and avoid running the dishwasher at the same time. Also, use water sparingly when watering over or near your drainfield.
- Use alternatives to toxic cleaners and chemicals around your home. Harmful chemicals can kill the beneficial bacteria in your septic tank, causing you to have your tank pumped more often. They can also be carried to your drainfield and into watercourses or drinking wells.
- Take hazardous wastes to disposal depots. Contact the CRD Hotline at 360-3030 or email hotline@crd.bc.ca for more information.
- Plant grass over your drainfield rather than trees or shrubs.
- Be aware that human wastes from people on medication (eg. antibiotics) can affect the performance of your septic system and may require more frequent pumping of your tank. Leftover medications should be returned to your pharmacy.
- Contact your local Vancouver Island Health Authority office for more information and advice (see contact information).

Don'ts

- Don't allow toxic cleaners or chemicals to be flushed into your septic system. Use environmentally friendly alternatives where possible. Never allow potential poisons to get into your drainfield, including paint, solvents, antifreeze, fuels, oil, pesticides or herbicides. They upset the beneficial bacteria in your system and can leach into groundwater and cause serious health or environmental concerns.

- Don't discharge water softeners into a package treatment plant.
- Don't use septic tank "starters" or similar products. They can do more harm than good. Allow the natural bacteria to work on their own.
- Don't use granular drain cleaners. Only a small amount can kill all of the beneficial bacteria in your system, leading to rapid build-up of solids or drainfield clogs.
- Don't use a garburator to dispose of food waste and other solids. Your tank will fill up prematurely and require more frequent pumping.
- Don't park, drive, pave or put heavy objects or machinery over your drainfield. This can compact the soil, crush pipes and keep air from getting into the ground - all of which can lead to system failure.
- Don't plant trees or shrubs in the drainfield area. Their roots can damage or plug the drainfield pipes. Grass is ideal.
- Don't allow roof drains, perimeter drains or surface water runoff from driveways and slopes to discharge into your tank or onto the drainfield. Excessive water can flood the system and cause premature failure.
- Don't use your toilet or drains as a trash can. Cooking grease, fats, cigarette butts, disposable diapers, sanitary napkins, hair, plastics, lint, metal, rubber, coffee/tea grounds and cat litter should all be kept out of your septic system and disposed of in the garbage.
- Don't make repairs or alterations to your septic system without consulting your Vancouver Island Health Authority office. If you're considering an addition to your home, you should contact the authority for advice on whether your septic system will need upgrading.

Contact Information

Vancouver Island Health Authority

Please contact or visit your nearest office for further information or assistance:

Saanich

201 711 Vernon Avenue
Victoria, BC V8X 5A7
Phone (250) 475-1858
Fax (250) 475-5130

Saanich Peninsula

2170 Mt. Newton X Road
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Western Communities

204 2780 Millstream Road
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Sooke

2215 Otter Point Road
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