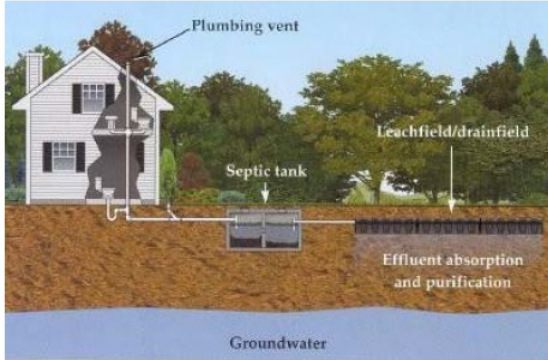


On-site Septic Systems (OSS)

Almost 25% of US homes dispose of domestic wastewater through on-site septic systems (OSS). These systems account for the most common wastewater treatment systems used in rural, unsewered areas of Clark County. Unlike public sewer systems, septic systems require routine maintenance for proper functioning.



How Septic Systems Work

A typical septic system contains two major components: a septic tank and a soil drainfield.

The septic tank:

- Removes solids, which helps protect the soil drainfield from clogging that can result in premature failure of the onsite system.
- Digests a portion of the solids and stores the remaining portion. Up to 50% of the solids that remain in the tank decompose. The remaining 50% accumulates in the bottom of the tank as sludge. When the level of sludge exceeds the tank's holding capacity, the sewage has less time to settle before leaving the tank. Eventually, the sludge level increases enough to allow solids to enter into the drainfield, resulting in damage to the field and the need for extensive repairs.

The soil drainfield:

- Is located underground in an unsaturated soil area on your property.

- Further treats the effluent through physical, chemical, and biological processes. The field consists of a series of underground perforated pipes installed in a one-foot deep layer of washed gravel, or a series of plastic chamber units. Here, the effluent is distributed, stored, and ultimately applied to the soil for treatment. **After filtering through the soil, the treated effluent enters the groundwater level for final disposal.**

Septic System Maintenance

The owner of an on-site septic system is responsible for properly operating, monitoring, and maintaining the system to reduce the risk of failure. To accomplish this, the owner shall have the OSS inspected by a certified O&M specialist as required per Clark County Code (CCC 24.17):

Type of System	Frequency of Inspection
Pressure Distribution*	Every 2 years
Simple gravity with or without pump	Every 3 years
All alternative systems (sand mounds, ATU, Glendons®, etc.) All food service establishments.	Yearly Note: Some systems are so complex the manufacturer recommends inspection more often for the first 2 years; be sure to meet the conditions of your
All systems	Within one (1) year of the date of the sale of the home.

* Clark County received a waiver from WA-DOH for inspection every 2 years



During the O & M inspection, the certified O & M specialist will determine if all the components of the OSS are properly working and/or need cleaning (e.g. pumps, filter, floats, pressure lines, drainfield, etc.) Also, the certified O&M specialist will verify the need for septic tank pumping. This will be determined by measuring the depth of septic sludge and scum in the septic tank. Inspection results are

submitted electronically to this department by the certified O & M specialist. These results may be viewed at: www.onlineRME.com.

Why should I maintain my system?

COST! Failing sewage systems are expensive to repair or replace. It typically costs between \$7,000 to \$15,000 or more to replace a failing system with a new, on-site sewage system.

GROUNDWATER PROTECTION! 98% of the county's drinking water comes from groundwater.

Septic System DOs & DON'Ts

The performance and life span of your septic system is directly dependent on how the system is operated and maintained. With proper care, a typical system should operate relatively trouble free for between twenty and thirty years. The list of dos and don'ts on the following page are vital to the long-term, efficient performance of your onsite septic system.

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