

happens, costly repairs will have to be made before the system will again function properly.

The frequency of tank cleaning or pumping is hard to determine as it depends on many factors and varies with different families. The only sure way to determine the need for service is to open the tank periodically and inspect it to determine the accumulation of solids, but most homeowners will not do this when it is needed. A good rule of thumb would be to have the septic tank pumped out every **3 - 5 years**. This should provide a margin of safety, but remember the most accurate way to determine the need for service is to inspect the tank contents on a yearly basis. When you decide to pump out the tank, contact the company which provided this brochure to you for information on what is needed.

(4) Automobiles and other heavy vehicles should not be allowed over the septic tank system. This causes excessive compaction and actual structural damage to septic tanks and tile absorption field. A sketch of your septic tank system can usually be obtained from your county health department to aid you in knowing the location of all parts of the system. This can be helpful in case of problems with the system or when the tank is cleaned.

(5) No presently known chemical, yeast, bacteria, enzyme, or other additive product will improve the operation or life expectancy of a septic tank system.



“Periodic cleaning or pumping out a septic tank is essential to prevent failure of the system.”

TIPS ON WATER CONSERVATION

Studies indicate that the average household can reduce water consumption by 15 - 20% by using water conserving toilets and shower heads. The toilets are readily available from most major manufacturers at no additional cost over conventional toilets. These are ideal for new construction as well as replacement units. The shower head water conserver can be attached to existing shower equipment at little cost and reduces the amount of water used by about 50%. The toilets reduce water usage from over 3 gallons per flush to 1.8 gallons.

The benefits from water conservation are many, but here are just a few:

1. Cost of water. Water rates are likely to continue to increase in the future.
2. Cost of heating water.
3. Cost of pumping water (well pump).
4. Reduced load on septic tank system.
5. Reduction in charge for disposal of sewage in city system.
6. Reduced load on sewer lines, sewage treatment plants, etc.

We all need to practice water conservation if we are to continue to have plentiful supplies of good water for use in our homes and industries.

This Brochure is provided to you by:

This brochure is provided to you as a public service by the professional Onsite Wastewater Treatment Installer/Pumper whose name appears in this brochure, a member of the Georgia Onsite Wastewater Assn.

Septic Tank effluent contains harmful bacteria and pollutants that may cause illness if not handled properly. Please contact this professional to perform all service on your system!

What or Who is GOWA

The Georgia Onsite Wastewater Association (GOWA) is a state-wide, non profit trade association which represents all those individuals and companies who are engaged in the design, sales, installation, maintenance, service /repair and regulation of individual onsite wastewater treatment systems for residential, commercial, industrial, governmental and institutional customers in the state of Georgia.

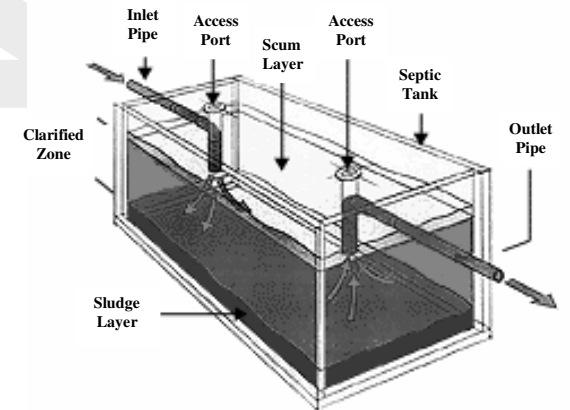
GOWA, formed in 1997, has over 400 members throughout the state. The membership is composed of a great diversity in sizes of member firms from the very large contractors to the very small family owned businesses. Regardless of the size, GOWA represents the **professionals** in the industry who have a genuine interest in improving the industry for the customer and all those individuals involved in the industry on a daily basis.

GOWA's goal is to promote **quality** and **professionalism** in the individual onsite wastewater industry in the state of Georgia and the demonstration of a genuine **concern** for the **safety and health** of our customers by providing quality services.

Georgia Onsite Wastewater Assn.

SEPTIC TANK SYSTEMS

A HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE



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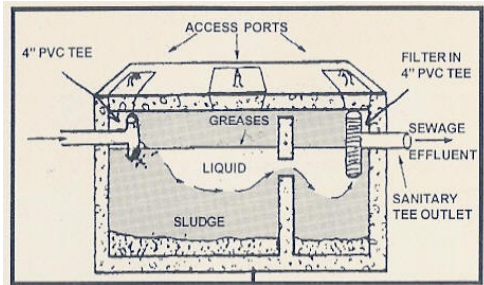
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What Is A Septic Tank System?

What exactly happens when you flush your commode? It's not rocket science but it is a little complicated. Hopefully this brochure will help answer some of your questions about your septic tank system.



A septic tank system consists of two components:

(1) The septic tank is an underground water-tight container, almost always constructed of concrete, and is built to receive sewage and retain the liquid portion for approximately 24 hours. The tank has three functions: First, it acts as a settling chamber to allow solids to settle to the tank bottom; second, the tank serves as a digestion chamber to allow biological treatment; and third, the tank becomes a storage vault for solids until removed.

In April 1999 the state of Georgia required a filter to be replaced on the outlet of the tank. Many different brands and types are used. They will need to be serviced periodically. This decision will be based on what is put inside the system and how much it is used.

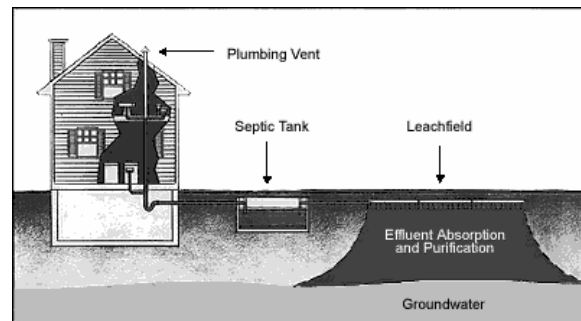
Tile absorption field (Nitrification Field) is the second and probably the most critical part of the septic tank system. It consists

of a trench or system of trenches. Many alternative systems are now in place, not only gravel systems. We now have chamber systems, tire chips, and styrofoam. The local environmental health department can assist in what system you have. Also your builder or onsite sewage professional can assist you.

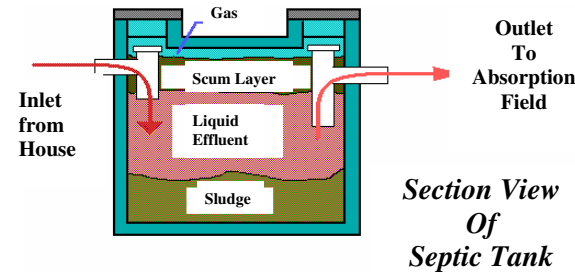
SEPTIC TANK SYSTEM INSTALLATION

To protect the public health from the dangers of improper sewage disposal practices, state regulations have been adopted. The regulations are designed to help insure that when a septic tank system is used, it will be constructed to meet appropriate standards, of sufficient size to handle the anticipated waste load, and that the soil is suitable for absorption of sewage. These regulations require that a permit to construct a septic tank system be obtained from the county health department. A septic tank system may not be covered with earth until an inspection is made and approval is given by the county health department sanitarian.

Remember that a septic tank system cannot be safely installed on all lots or building sites. Some lots or building sites are unsuitable because of the type of soil, terrain (*too steep, too low, or wet, etc.*) size, ground water, rock, or other factors which should interfere with proper operation of the system.



Although one usually wants to keep all the trees and shrubs possible on his lot, remember that the roots of trees and shrubs growing near the septic tank system may infiltrate the absorption trenches and block the flow of sewage. It is advisable to remove trees and shrubs growing over the trenches or near the septic tank system.



CARE OF YOUR SEPTIC TANK SYSTEM

A septic tank system requires prudent usage and maintenance to insure its best performance. Here are some tips:

- (1) Only household waste and toilet tissue should be disposed of in a septic tank system. Keep all kitchen greases out of the system.
- (2) Any leaks that develop in the plumbing fixtures should be immediately corrected. A leaking faucet or toilet tank, no matter how small the leak, will eventually result in complete saturation and failure of the absorption field. *(Continued)*
- (3) A septic tank needs **periodic cleaning or pumping out of the accumulated solids**. If the solids are allowed to build up in the tank to a point that they begin to pass out of the tank into the soil absorption network, the soil will soon become clogged with the solids, resulting in failure of the system. If this

System Record

1. Pretreatment
 - Septic Tank Size _____
 - Pump Tank Size _____
2. Field Line Type
 - Rock Trenches
 - Gravel-less Pipe
 - Other _____
 - Size _____
3. Accessories
 - Filter _____ Model _____
 - Pump _____ Model _____
 - Alarm _____ Model _____
4. Aerobic Units
 - Brand _____
 - Size Pump _____
 - Leaching Type _____

Service Record

| Date | Service | Contractor |
|------|---------|------------|
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Septic Tank Side View

