

A HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO

SEPTIC SYSTEMS

Proper maintenance of your septic system saves money, protects the value of your property, keeps your water clean and safe, and protects the environment. It will also extend the life of your system by many years. Properly maintaining your system is much cheaper than replacing it!



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TIPS CHECKLIST

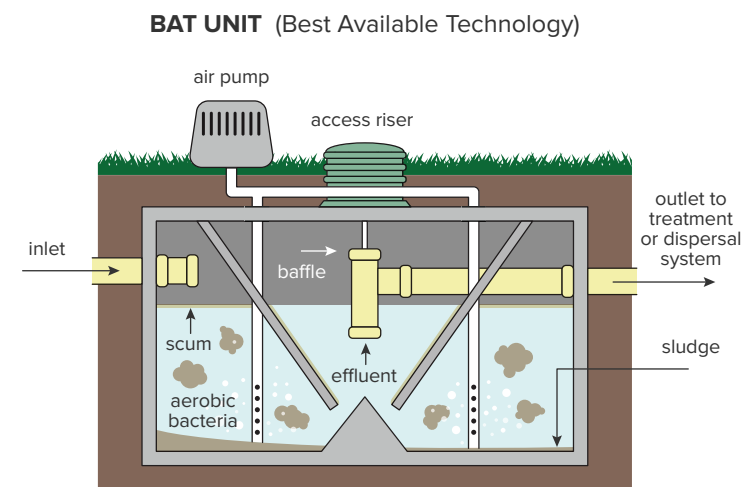
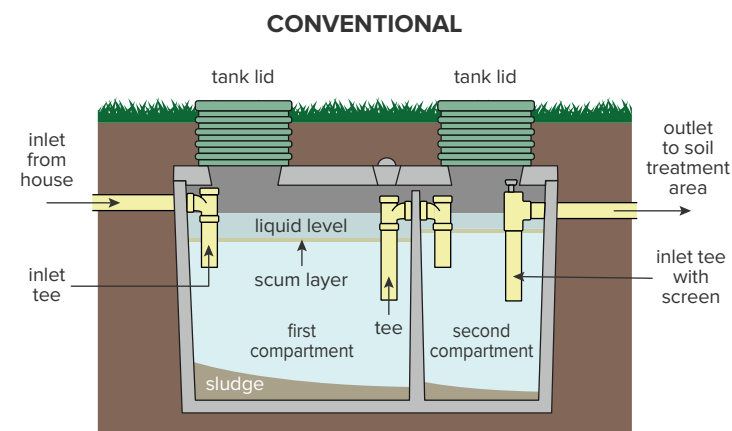
- ✓ Have your system inspected and pumped out by a licensed contractor as needed or every two to five years.
- ✓ Use water efficiently to avoid overtaxing your system.
- ✓ Do not pour grease, fats, or harmful chemicals like paints and solvents down your drain.
- ✓ Do not flush non-water-soluble items down the toilet.
- ✓ Do not use a garbage disposal. Garbage disposals increase the amount of suspended solids which may carry over into the soil treatment area causing clogging and possible premature failure.
- ✓ Check with the local authority on how to manage discharge from water softeners or other water treatment devices.
- ✓ Do not drive or park over your soil treatment area, and only plant grass over it. Always direct roof and surface drainage away from your system.

HOW YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM WORKS

After installation, you will be the owner and operator of a system that is designed to protect public health and the environment. A properly installed and operated septic system treats wastewater from your home (toilets, sinks, showers and baths, washing machines, and dishwashers) and eventually returns it to the

Septic tank

either a conventional septic tank or a BAT unit.



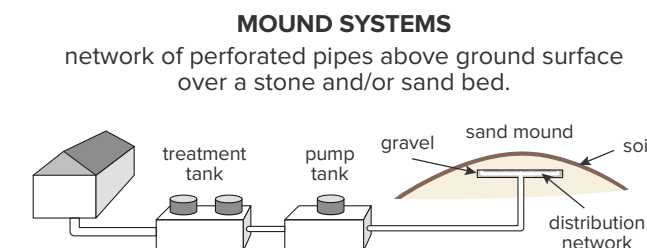
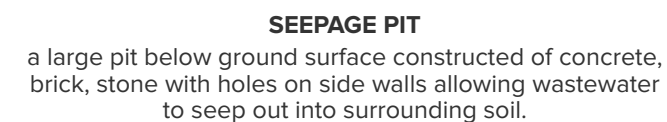
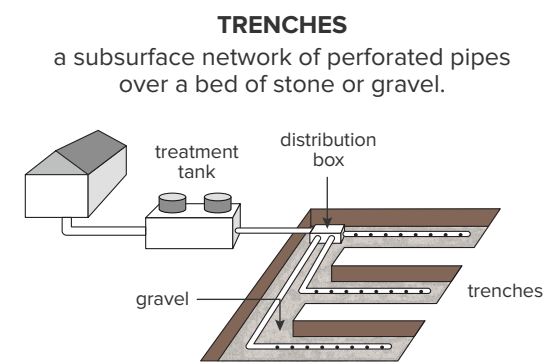
Please note: BAT units can vary in components and design

groundwater. Your onsite system represents a significant investment which you will want to protect.

A septic system generally consists of two main components working together to properly treat and dispose of the wastewater from your home.

Soil treatment component

where the effluent is dispersed and treated in the soil.



FINDING YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

Once you have determined that you have a septic system, you can find it by:

- Looking on your home's "as built" drawing. Please contact DPS to obtain this permit record.
- Checking your yard for clean-outs, lids, and manhole covers.
- Contacting a septic system service provider to help you locate it.

SIGNS OF TROUBLE

- Wastewater backing up or gurgling into household drains.
- A strong odor around the septic tank or drainfield.
- Bright green, spongy grass appearing on the drainfield.
- Sewage on the ground or backing up into the house.
- The system gets waterlogged after periods of heavy rain.

If you have a septic system failure or problems with your system, please contact Montgomery County Dept. of Permitting Services Well and Septic Section by calling 240-777-0311.

RESOURCES

EPA

epa.gov/septic

Montgomery County Dept. of Environmental Protection
montgomerycountymd.gov/water/supply/well-and-septic.html

National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association
nowra.org

University of Maryland Extension
extension.umd.edu/learn



montgomerycountymd.gov/dps