

Homeowner's Manual

For Decentralized Wastewater Collection, Treatment and Disposal
Systems



Preventive Maintenance Guide

PIPERTON PUBLIC WORKS -----901-853-4830

AFTER HOURS/EMERGENCY -----901-288-7661



What you should know.

Your home includes a reliable, carefully engineered decentralized wastewater system or STEP system, — for the collection and treatment of household wastewater. STEP means Septic Tank Effluent Pump. Your STEP system includes a holding tank for sewage, a filtering chamber, and a small, high-pressure pump within the tank. The liquid waste is pumped through a small pressure line into sewer lines leading to the Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The STEP system at your home does a terrific job of decomposing household waste. STEP tanks are watertight containers which remove large solids and greases, provide anaerobic digestion of the solids, and storage of the sludge and scum. Septic tanks do not remove large numbers of bacteria and viruses. This is accomplished by pumping the

wastewater to the Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Plant. This engineered and state approved system will eliminate the problems associated with failing septic systems.

Failing septic systems represent a major public health threat. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), as many as 90,000 people get sick and 900 die each year from waterborne microbial infections. Much of the contamination comes from failing septic systems.

What you do at your home will affect the overall performance of the system, so it is important that you follow some simple rules or guidelines, which will be outlined in this manual. Just read and practice the "do's and don'ts" that follow.

Every member of your household should be familiar with these. By following these simple tips your STEP system will function for decades.

The utility which owns and operates the system serving your home is responsible for maintenance and operation of all system components following the outfall line from your home.

A flat charge of \$38.75 will be added each month to your water bill.

Please retain this manual with important papers related to your home purchase

INSIDE THE HOUSE

There are a number of do's and don'ts that will help to ensure a long life and minimal maintenance for your system. As a general rule, nothing should be disposed into any wastewater system that hasn't first been ingested, other than toilet tissue, mild detergents, and wash water. Here are some additional guidelines:



DON'T flush dangerous and damaging substances into your wastewater treatment system. Specifically, do not flush . . .

- Excessive amounts of bath or body oils
- Water softener backwash
- Flammable or toxic products
- Household cleaners, especially floor wax and rug cleaners
- Chlorine bleach, chlorides, and pool or spa products
- Pesticides, herbicides, or agricultural chemicals or fertilizers
- Oil based latex paints, paint

thinners, paint removers or strippers

DO use substitutes for household hazardous waste.

Replace the following hazardous products with products that are less environmentally harmful. The hazardous cleaners are listed below, followed by the suggested substitute.

Ammonia-based cleaners: Sprinkle baking soda on a damp sponge. For windows, use a solution of 2 tbs. white vinegar to 1 qt. water. Place the mixture into a spray bottle.

Disinfectants: Use borax: 1/2 cup in a gallon of water; deodorizes also.

Drain decloggers: Use a plunger or metal snake, or remove and clean trap.

Scouring cleaners & powders:

Sprinkle baking soda on a damp sponge or add 4 tbs. baking soda to 1 qt. warm water. Or use Bon Ami; it's cheaper and won't scratch.

Carpet/upholstery cleaners: Sprinkle dry cornstarch or baking soda on, then vacuum. For tougher stains, blot. Oven cleaners: Quickly sprinkle salt on drips, then scrub. Use baking soda and scouring pads on older spills.

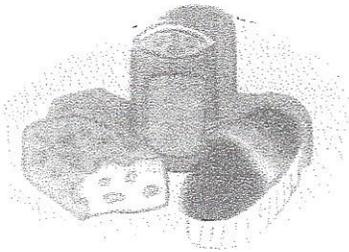
Laundry Detergents: Choose one with a zero phosphate content or use soap flakes with 1/3 cup of washing soda.

Metal cleaners:

Brass and copper: scrub with a used half of lemon dipped in salt.

Stainless steel: use scouring pad and soapy water.

Silver: rub gently with toothpaste and soft wet cloth.



DO use your trash can to dispose of substances that cause maintenance problems. Dispose of the following with your trash:

- Egg shells, kitty litter, coffee grounds, tea bags, cigarette butts, chewing tobacco.
- Paper towels, newspapers, sanitary napkins, diapers, gum, candy wrappers, rubber gloves, condoms.

Toilet cleaners: Sprinkle on baking soda or Bon Ami, then scrub with a toilet brush.

Furniture/floor polishes: To clean, use oil soap and warm water. Dry with soft cloth. Polish with 1 part lemon juice and 2 parts oil (any kind), or use natural products with lemon oil or beeswax in mineral oil.

- Cooking grease (collect in a container and dispose with trash)

- Rags, large amounts of hair

Avoid using garbage disposals excessively. Compost scraps or dispose with your trash.

DO conserve water:

- Use water saving devices on faucets and showerheads.

- When replacing old toilets, buy a low-flush model.

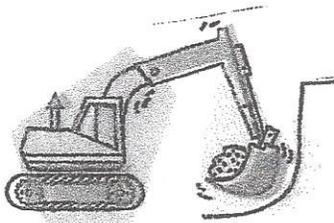
DO repair leaky plumbing fixtures. (A leaky toilet can waste up to 2,000 gallons of water in a single day - that's 10-20 times more water than a household's typical daily usage).

DON'T use special additives that claim they will enhance the performance of your tank or system. Additives can cause major damage to other areas in the collection system. The natural bacteria that grow in your system generate their own enzymes that are sufficient for breaking down and digesting nutrients in the wastewater. Additives can cause maintenance problems inside of the tank that you may be financially responsible for!

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

DO familiarize yourself with the location of your STEP system and electrical control panel.

DO keep the tank access lid secure to the riser at all times. If bolts are lost or damaged, call your Utility immediately for replacement.



DON'T dig without knowing the location of your STEP system. As much as possible, plan landscaping and permanent outdoor structures before installation. Tank lids **MUST** remain visible and must not be covered. Maintain a 24 inch clearance.

DON'T dump RV waste into your STEP system. It will increase the frequency of required septage pumping. (Some RV waste may contain chemicals that are toxic or that may retard the biological digestion occurring within the STEP system.)

DON'T enter your tank. Any work to the tank should be done from the outside. Gases that can be generated in the tank and/or oxygen depletion can be fatal.

DON'T drive over your tank or any buried components in your system. If the system is subject to possible traffic, put up a barricade or a row of shrubs.

DON'T ever connect rain gutters or storm drains to the STEP system or allow surface water to drain into it. The additional water could have a negative impact on the decentralized wastewater treatment plant and drip irrigation field.

DON'T hook up to a pressure mainline. The sewer mainlines are under high pressure. Any **unpermitted** work is against the law.

IMPORTANT! CAUTION!

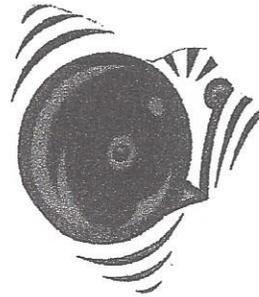
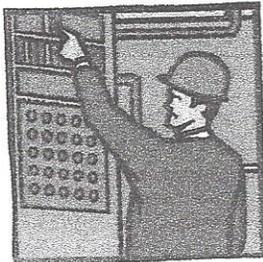
Only a qualified electrician or authorized installer/operator should work on your control panel. Before anyone does any work on either the wiring on the level control floats and pumps in the vault or on the control panel itself, it is imperative to first switch the isolation fuse/breaker and the circuit breaker in the panel to the "Off" positions, then switch "Off" the power to the system at the main breaker!

At the Control Panel Important! Caution!

DON'T turn "off" the main circuit breaker to the wastewater pumps when going on vacation. If there is any filtration or inflow into the system, the pumps will need to handle it.

DO familiarize yourself with the location of your decentralized wastewater system and electrical control panel.

A 3-foot clearance around the alarm box must be maintained. This means no shrubs or fencing can block the alarm box.



DO remember that the audible alarm can be silenced by pushing the black toggle switch located directly above the "Push to Silence" label on the side of the electrical control panel. **DO** take immediate action to correct the problem in the event of an alarm condition. Call your system operator or maintenance company whenever the alarm comes on; it sounds like a smoke alarm.

With normal use, the tank has a reserve storage capacity good for 24-48 hours.

Additional Benefits: Besides improving the performance and longevity of your system, following these best practice suggestions will conserve energy and water usage. Your system will function for decades with little to no maintenance other than periodic inspections.

**Recommended
for Septic Tank
6oz. Biweekly**

