

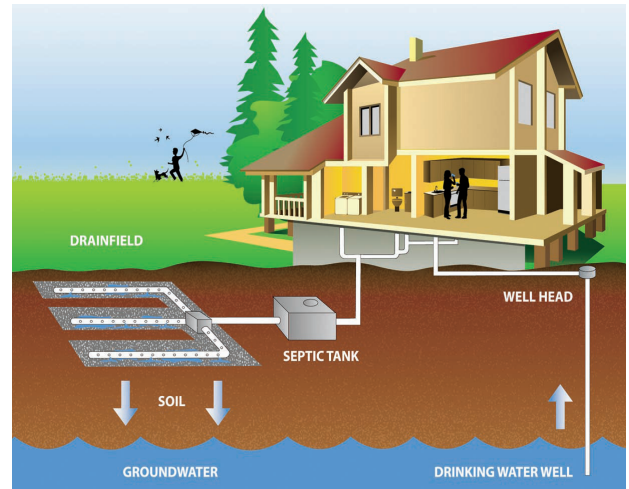


On-Site Septic Systems

Septic System Care Begins with You!

What are the benefits of maintaining my septic system?

- Ensure that you and your family have a functioning system to handle household sewage. Regular inspections help to prevent system failure. Failing septic systems are expensive to repair or replace, and improper maintenance is a common cause of early system failure.
- Help to ensure the health of your family, community, and environment. Inadequately treated household wastewater can be released into the environment and can pose a risk to public health.
- Maintain the economic health of your community. Failing septic systems can cause property values to decline and can contribute to the pollution of local rivers, lakes, and shorelines used for commercial or recreational activities.



What if my system fails?

Aside from the economic burden it will place on you as the homeowner, failing and improperly functioning on-site sewage systems contaminate surface and groundwater. This can lead to:

- Disease
- Shellfish downgrades
- Beach closures
- Contaminated wells
- Low dissolved oxygen levels in marine waters
- Algae blooms

The average cost for replacing a septic tank and drainfield is more than \$12,000! Common, minor repairs found during inspection typically cost only a few hundred dollars.

Septic System Do's and Don'ts

- **Do** have your system inspected annually and pumped as needed, typically every three to five years.
- **Do** use less water to extend your system's lifespan.
- **Do** keep all cars and trucks off the septic tank and drainfield areas to prevent pipes from breaking and soil from compacting.
- **Do** keep trees and other deep rooted plants from growing on the drainfield.
- **Don't** use septic tank additives; they can harm your on-site system and contaminate ground and surface water.
- **Don't** flush solids like cigarettes, tampons, baby wipes, and grease into the system, and avoid using a garbage disposal.
- **Don't** put large amounts of strong chemicals, such as cleaning products, down the drain.

On-Site Septic System Management Plan

Why is the On-Site Septic System Management Plan necessary?

Septic system care is the responsibility of the owner. The Health Department has a responsibility to ensure there is a system in place to: find and repair failing septic systems; ensure all septic systems are routinely inspected, function properly, and are repaired when needed; and, protect public health from sewage. The plan lays out the steps necessary for the Health Department to implement this system and ensure public safety.

Nearly 53,000
septic systems in
Thurston County
treat about
12,000,000 gallons
of sewage per day.

What are the benefits of this plan?

The plan adds resources and puts systems in place for:

- Preventing, identifying, and correcting failing septic systems and water pollution problems caused by sewage.
- Educating, informing, and assisting septic system owners.
- Creating an inventory of septic systems to identify and ensure septic system owners get the information they need to monitor and maintain their systems.
- Providing staff to answer questions and help owners troubleshoot their systems.
- Protecting water resources, including drinking water, by reducing exposure to sewage from failing systems and improving water quality when failures are repaired.
- Providing assistance to owners in finding grants or loans to help fix failures.

What will I be charged as a septic system owner?

Estimated Charges
<p>A tiered structure based on the location of the system, documented water quality problems, and type of work required by the Health Department in those areas. Estimated costs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$22/year for septic systems in the Chehalis River watershed.• \$44/year for septic systems in the Puget Sound basin but not in special areas.• \$66/year for septic systems in a Marine Recovery Area or other special area.

*The proposed charges will replace existing charges. They will not be added to current charges. They will replace the fees for operational certificates, pump reports, and time-of-transfer.

The public hearing for the on-site septic management plan was held on June 14, 2016. The Thurston County Board of Commissioners are deliberating on the plan and will make a decision at an open public meeting, date to be determined.

Need more information, or have comments or questions?

Website: www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehomp

Contact Us: Art Starry, Project Coordinator
starrya@co.thurston.wa.us
360-867-2587

Septic Help Line: 360-867-2669