

**Thurston County  
PHSS  
Environmental  
Health Division**

**Tips for Having Your Septic  
Tank Pumped**

Replacing a septic system can cost between \$15,000 and \$50,000 and requires a permit from Thurston County.

A septic tank **inspection** typically costs between \$150 and \$250. Getting your tank **pumped** usually costs between \$350 and \$500 (may be more if there is a charge per gallon pumped).

Your tank will need to be uncovered (dug up) for either. You can do this yourself or pay the pumper to do it. The cost for uncovering the tank varies depending on depth but can be expensive.

Pumping a pump chamber for a pressure system usually costs between \$75 and \$250, depending on its size.

Consider installing access **RISERS** on the septic tank. Risers replace the concrete lids and make the tank accessible without digging. Material costs for two 24-inch diameter risers range from \$250 - \$450 depending on tank depth. Two risers are needed for a 2-compartment tank. For information and rebate form [click here](#).

**Since Prices vary for septic tank pumping services, get estimates from several firms.** Speak with friends and neighbors for recommendations. **When you get your tank inspected, ask the pumper to recommend when your tank should be pumped next.** The tank should be pumped when the solids in the tank are more than 1/3 of the tank volume. Different households accumulate

solids at different rates.

*Never use septic tank additives or flushable wipes. 'Septic Safe' is an advertisement term and has no industry meaning!*

**Pumping Pointers**

1. Both compartments of a two-chamber tank must be pumped out. Tanks installed after the mid-1970s probably have two chambers.
2. The contents should be pumped out through the main lids, not the baffle.
3. The tank should be thoroughly emptied there is no need to leave "starter" material behind.
4. If your tank has an outlet filter, the filter should be removed and cleaned. The filter should be cleaned at least once a year.
5. If you have a pressurized system, have the pump and pump chamber inspected and pumped. If there are any solids found in the pump chamber (floating or settled), you should have it pumped out by the pumper. Pumpers should not change the arrangement of float switches or control panel settings.
6. While pumping or inspecting your septic system, pumpers may identify other problems. Pumpers can do minor repairs, such as repairing or replacing a broken baffle. We recommend you **get a second opinion for estimated repair(s).**

7. The pumper is required to file a pump report online at [www.onlinermc.com](http://www.onlinermc.com) and provide a copy to you.

**If you have any questions about these guidelines, or need more information, call the Thurston County Septic Help Line at 360-867-2669; TDD Line 711 or 800-833-6388 or go to our [website](#).**

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