



Pickaway County General Health District
Environmental Health Division
PO Box 613, 110 Island Road, Circleville, OH 43113
740-477-9667 Ext 225, www.pchd.org

Guidelines for the Operation and Maintenance of your household sewage system

The Pickaway County General Health District recommends that homeowners complete the following to prolong the life of a sewage system and to help prevent problems with a sewage system in the future that may cause sewage nuisances:

Septic Tank and Aeration Tank Maintenance:

- Recommend pumping septic tank once every 2 – 5 years, recommend to clean effluent filters once every 6 months
- Maintain riser lids to keep them from leaking and intrusion of surface water. Keep riser lids accessible for easy access to tanks.
- Monitor all compartments of tanks routinely. Effluent (water exiting tanks into distribution box) should not be strong in odors, should not be dark, gray, or septic smelling and should be clear, brown, and little to no odors.
- Avoid flushing or pouring toxic chemicals, paints, oils, fats, grease, or other harmful substances into system or in sinks
- Avoid flushing or placing baby wipes, paper, plastic, or other items down your toilet to prevent clogging of plumbing
- For aeration tanks, have motors and / or mechanical components serviced by a registered service provider 2 times a year or as recommended by the manufacturer.
- Complete visual checks of alarms, timers, and other mechanical components routinely to ensure they are functional and operational. Contact a registered service provider for repair / assistance if the mechanical components are not functional.
- Check lift stations or dosing tanks and mechanicals routinely to ensure they are operational. If water levels are unusually high and don't recede, contact a service provider or septage hauler for assistance. Routine cleaning and maintenance of pumps should be completed in accordance to manufacturer recommendation.

Soil Absorption Component Maintenance:

Leach trenches:

- Recommend altering leach trenches routinely and can be done by opening the distribution box and adjusting the elbow pipe or speedleveler to prevent flow into the pipe that needs rested. Older systems generally have two distribution pipes to a leach field, and elbows or caps should be altered routinely. Altering lines once every 3-6 months allows a leach trench to rest and recover.
- Recommend checking distribution box routinely or drop boxes routinely to assess the water levels in each leach line.
- Recommend checking inspection ports routinely to monitor levels of water in leach trench.
- Ensure adequate top soil is maintained on the leaching component and keeping grass growing adequately for oxygen exchange and transpiration of the subsoil. 6- 8 inches of soil is needed on top of a soil absorption component.
- Avoid driving vehicle or heavy equipment across your leach field to avoid damage.
- Fill in area where soil settles around the tank or above leach lines routinely. Plant grass seed routinely to keep adequate grass cover. Avoid planting trees on leaching area.
- Avoid placing decks, structures, barns or pools over leaching or components or over septic tanks.
- Keep soil graded to allow water to run-off of leaching area and away from leaching.
- Keep downspouts and other surface run-off away from leaching areas or septic tanks to prevent ponding of surface water.
- Check perimeter drains, curtain drains, or other subsurface drains at the outlet or observation port to assess if drains are operational. Keep animal guards on all outlet pipes to prevent entry of pests or animals. Check observation ports to determine if drainage systems are flowing and operational and for signs or smell of sewage infiltration.
- Check for signs of effluent seepage above leach trenches, along slopes below leach trenches, or low lying areas for signs of failure. Contact the health department for assistance if surfacing of effluent is observed.

Additional maintenance for Mounds, or drip distribution systems: contact the health department for information or visit www.pchd.org

Service Contracts

- All systems approved for a soil depth credit must maintain a service contract with a registered service provider who is certified or approved by the manufacturer to service the system. Homeowners must maintain the service contracts or can become an approved homeowner service provider to maintain the system.

Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Reporting

- All systems installed after 2015 will be added to the Pickaway County General Health District's O&M Program. Homeowners are recommended to maintain a file or records of all services done on a system such as septage pumping reports, service inspections, and repairs or replacement of devices. Contractors must send reports to health department as part of the O&M reporting and health district staff may complete a follow-up evaluation to ensure system is in compliance and not failing.