

How a Septic Tank works:

Wastewater flows from your house into the septic tank where settling occurs. The heavier solids (e.g. organic waste) sink to the bottom of the tank and are gradually digested by bacteria in the absence of air to form a sludge layer. Liquid above the sludge layer drains away from the tank into a soakaway or stream. Over time the sludge layer becomes thicker and eventually has to be removed by being pumped out.



How should I maintain my tank?

Because you can't see it, it's easy to forget about having a tank, but regular maintenance is important to keep it working well. The number of people living in the house and how much water you use will affect how often the tank needs to be pumped out / emptied, but in general, most tanks need to be emptied every 2 years or so. If you can see where the liquid from the tank is draining out, you can check whether or not it is a light grey colour, which indicates a healthy tank. If it includes solids, smells bad or has a fluffy grey fungus, then the tank needs attention!



Septic Tank - Dos and Don'ts

Things you do inside and outside the house can help or hinder your tank:

Do:

- ◆ Use mild detergents, toilet fresheners, washing powders etc in MODERATE amounts, which won't upset the bacterial balance of the tank.
- ◆ Try using less detergent than at present in your washing machine, dishwasher etc - you might surprise yourself by finding that half a measure / half a tablet works just as well as a full one, particularly in the soft water around here.
- ◆ Use disinfectants if necessary, but use as little as possible

Don't :

- ◆ Flush ANYTHING other than human waste, toilet paper and water down the toilet. Anything else should be bagged and binned.
- ◆ Dispose of grease or cooking oil down the kitchen sink - pour them into containers, and dispose of them in a bin.
- ◆ Put paint brush cleaning liquids, garden chemicals or other harsh chemicals down the drain.
- ◆ Connect rainwater drainage pipes (e.g. roof guttering down spouts) to drains leading into your septic tank