



# Household Sewage Treatment System Factsheet

## Septic System

What is a septic system?

A septic system treats sewage effluent through anaerobic digestion of bacteria and consists of a tank that traps solids and a soil absorption component that provides additional filtration and treatment of sewage effluent. The soil absorption component varies by system, but common components are leaching tile fields, evapotranspiration fields, or elevated sand mounds. Some septic systems discharge off-lot and receive filtration through a sub-surface sand filter bed or manufactured filter component installed on the system.

How often should I have my septic tank pumped?

The recommended frequency for having a septic tank pumped is every 3-5 years, but this depends on factors that vary from one home to another. Consult your service provider to discuss a frequency that best suits your individual system.

### **I can't find my septic tank, what do I do?**

Contact Lorain County Public Health and request a copy of the system diagram. If one exists for your property, it can be provided at no charge. After locating your system components that are below grade, contact a service provider to install risers to make servicing your system easier.

Do products like Rid-X® replace the need to pump the septic tank?

No. Septic tank treatment products do not replace the need to pump the septic tank.



## Household Sewage Treatment System Factsheet

### Septic System- Operation and Maintenance

State and Local Requirements (*Ohio Administrative Code 3701-29*)

- Septic systems shall not cause a public health nuisance and shall be routinely maintained to prevent nuisances.
- An annual Operation and Maintenance (O&M) permit from Lorain County Public Health will be required in the future. For any questions regarding Lorain County Public Health's O&M program, please visit [LorainCountyHealth.com](http://LorainCountyHealth.com)

#### Routine Homeowner Monitoring

System component	Monitoring
Septic tank	Ensure no sewage or water is leaking outside of the tank riser or lid. Do not enter the septic tank, poisonous gasses may be present. Do not attempt to pump or service the tank.  Consult your service provider to determine the proper frequency to have your system pumped and cleaned. A typical frequency is 3-5 years, but varies based on usage.
High Water Alarm (system types vary)	On the control panel for the sewage treatment system, locate the toggle switch for the alarm. Move it to "Test"- you should see a flashing light and audibly hear the alarm. Move the toggle back to "On" or "Auto" when done. If the high water alarm is left on "Test" and then silenced, you will not know if a problem with the system is occurring.
Dosing Pump (system types vary)	On the control panel for the sewage treatment system, locate the toggle switch for the pump. Move it to "Hand" or "Manual". In several seconds, the system should begin dosing. <b>Once you've</b> confirmed it is working properly, put the toggle switch back to "Auto" or "On". If the pump is left on "Hand" or "Manual" it may burn it out and not be covered under warranty.

Follow all manufacturer recommendations and guidelines of your service contract.

Do not attempt to service the system



## Septic System

### Homeowner Responsibilities and Preventive Care

- Keep all system components accessible for inspections, pumping, and service.
- Have the septic tank pumped and system cleaned every 3-5 years, or at a frequency determined by your service provider.
- Contact your registered service provider with any problems with the system. Warning signs for a septic system include, but are not limited to:
  - Activation of the high water alarm light / audible warning
  - Excessive wetness or observed leaking from the tank riser or lid
  - Damaged risers or lids
  - Plumbing backups in the house
  - Foul sewage odors during periods of water usage (morning/night typically)
- Maintain all records of your sewage treatment system in a file
- Do not access the septic tank for cleaning, pumping, or servicing. Poisonous gasses may be present and pose a serious health risk. Contact a registered sewage hauler or your service provider.

(Continued on next page)



- Do not allow anyone to drive or park over any components of the sewage treatment system. Some, but not all, distribution pipes may be suitable to drive over if they are protected by a sleeve. Contact Lorain County Public Health for a diagram of your system if you are unsure.

- Avoid flushing the following items:

Coffee Grounds, Disposable Diapers, Sanitary Napkins, Tampons, Cigarette Butts, Condoms, Dental Floss, Cat Litter, Gauze, Fats Greases and Oil, Paper Towels, Paints, Varnishes, Thinners, Waste Oils, Photographic Solutions, Pesticides, and other hazardous or harmful chemicals that require special disposal.

- Ensure the septic tank risers and lids are adequately secured to prevent access and promote safety. Septic tanks can be several feet deep and should always be kept covered with a heavy concrete lid or well-secured plastic lid with screws.
- The use of garbage disposals should be limited or avoided with a septic tank. If food debris enters the septic tank it is treated as a solid and your septic tank may require more frequent pumping.
- Do not plant trees, dig, or construction buildings or barns over the soil absorption component (mounds, leaching tile fields, etc.)

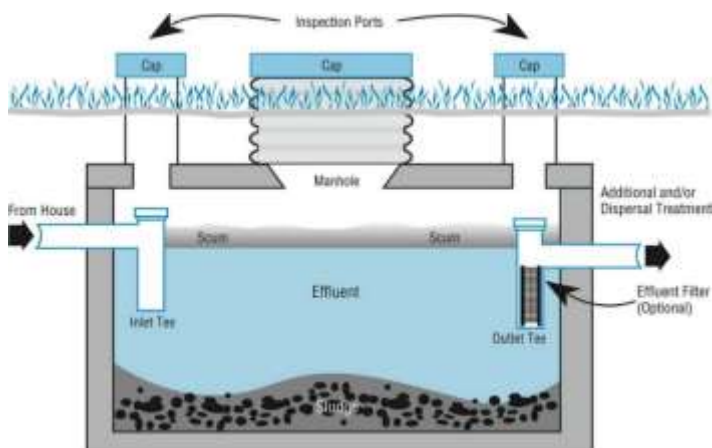


## Septic System Components & Functions

*Not all Septic Systems are equipped with all of these components. Models, Manufacturers, and Products will vary. Consult your Service Provider. LCPH does not endorse any particular manufacturer of sewage treatment system components.*

### Septic Tank

- Traps scum and solids, provides treatment through retention time and anaerobic bacteria digestion, settles solids before effluent enters the dosing chamber or soil absorption component.



### Control Panel (varies by system type)

- Electrical wiring, fuses, and toggles and switches for system operation and testing. Traditionally houses controls for the aerator, the pump, and the high water alarm.





**Lorain County  
Public Health**

For the Health of Us All

Dosing Chamber (Consists of Tank, Pump, and Activation Floats) (varies by system type)

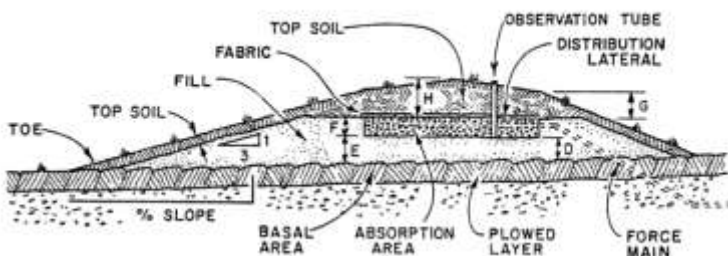
- Provides effluent retention volume, pumps effluent, and provides homeowner notification of improper drainage with high water alarm float.



Soil Absorption Component (varies by system type)

- Provides filtration and absorption of sewage effluent after receiving primary biological treatment from the septic tank. Some systems discharge off-lot and do not have an absorption component.

Design Sand Mound



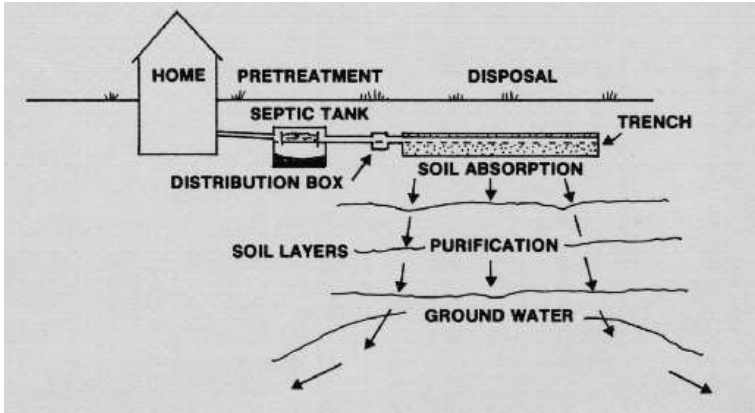




**Lorain County  
Public Health**

For the Health of Us All

## Leaching Tile Field



## Peat Filtration & Design Sand Mound



Contact your service provider with any questions  
**regarding your system's components and their**  
operation.