

# How Well Do You Know Your Septic System?

## Important Info to Help Prevent Costly Mistakes

I have sold many houses to people who've never owned a home with a septic system and they are never told or shown how to maintain one properly. I thought it was important to devote an article to their care and maintenance. Your actions dictate your septic systems longevity as well as the need for costly repairs.

For those of you who have never had one, a septic system consists of two components; a septic tank and a drain field. Primary treatment occurs in the septic tank where bacteria digest organic materials in the wastewater. The water then flows into the drain field for secondary treatment. Here, bacteria complete the digestion process as the waste-water slowly infiltrates into the soil. After conferring Glenn Tatum Septic, and through my own personal experience, I have compiled a list of do's and don'ts to help you keep your system running efficiently and to give you many years of service.

- Never throw tissues into your system.
- No feminine products should ever be flushed!
- Keep trees away from your system. The roots can destroy it!
- Never drain oils of any kind down your drain. Use glass jars to empty your cooking oil or salad oils and dispose jar with your weekly trash.
- Don't rinse your paint brushes in your sink. Paint should never go into your system.
- Don't use your garbage disposal. A house with a septic system should not be using this.
- Avoid antibacterial soaps and detergents. This will kill the friendly bacteria you need.
- Try to space washing clothes through out the week or install a separate system for your washing machine. I have purchased a front loader that uses 50% less water and detergents. Not only does it clean my clothes very well but I am helping my system to last longer!
- Use only liquid laundry soap. Never use powders of any kind.
- Don't use Draino or any of those kinds of drain cleaners!
- Avoid bleach! Another liquid that will kill the friendly bacteria!
- Don't ever flush your old medications down the drain where they can kill bacteria.

About 95% of the sludge and scum in your septic is broken down by bacteria. The other 5% remains in the tank and builds up in the sludge layer. Consequently, your septic tank must be pumped on a regular basis. Otherwise, solids would eventually fill the tank and wash out into the drain field. This is detrimental to the overall health and longevity of your system. If this happens, it could prematurely clog the soil pores. Pumping out the septic tank at that point will not restore your system. You should have the system pumped out on an annual basis.

Watch for the water flow coming from your roof during a storm. I have a tile roof so my house cannot have gutters. We had water running over our drain field during all of the storms. We installed a rock garden at the front of our home so that the water was no longer dumping heavily into our system

For the people who would like a product that you can put down your drain that will help keep it clean Glenn Tatum recommends SEPTIC 2000. This product is also good for ridding your drains of hair and oil. You don't have to use it on a regular basis but if you are concerned about oil and hair this would be wonderful, you can purchase this product from Glenn Tatum Septic Company. If this is something you are interested in just call them at: 407-947-0478 If you do these things your system will benefit greatly! - Anne-Marie

For all your Real Estate needs... Call or email [Anne-Marie Ferraro](mailto:amferraro@watsonrealtycorp.com) at [407-622-8531](tel:407-622-8531)  
[amferraro@watsonrealtycorp.com](mailto:amferraro@watsonrealtycorp.com) Visit my website [www.anne-marieferraro.com](http://www.anne-marieferraro.com)



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