

# ANDY'S

## SEPTIC TANK SERVICE

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We recommend cleaning your septic tank every \_\_\_\_ years, if two tanks, have it cleaned every \_\_\_\_ years.

### **How your septic system works:**

Waste material from the house enters the septic tank where:

- Heavier solids settle to the bottom and form a sludge layer.
- Lighter wastes such as oil and grease rise to the top and form a scum layer.
- Between these two layers is liquid wastewater.

When waste enters the tank, bacteria begin to break down the solid materials. This break down reduces solids, but also leaves a residue behind in the tank. As time passes, this residue builds up, and must be removed to prevent it from entering the drain field and clogging the system. The center liquid layer flows slowly from the tank into the drainage field. Perforated pipes allow the liquid to be equally distributed in a gravel-filled disposal field. Once the liquid reaches the disposal field, it soaks into the soil. The soil then acts as the final filter for treatment of waste received from the septic system.

### **You Should:**

- Have your septic tank pumped out by a licensed operator every 2-3 years.
- Learn the location of your septic tank, drainfield and well. Keep a sketch of it handy with your maintenance record for service visits.
- Divert other sources of water, like roof drains, house footing drains, and sump pumps to lawn areas away from the septic system.
- Take leftover household chemicals to your approved waste collection center for disposal. Use bleach disinfectants, and toilet bowl cleaners sparingly and in accordance with product labels.
- Cut the grass over the disposal field.
- Spread clothes-washing over the entire week and avoid half-loads.
- Fix all faucet and toilet float valve leaks.

### **You Should NOT:**

- Go down into a septic tank. Toxic gases are produced by the natural treatment processes in septic tanks and can kill humans in minutes.
- Allow heavy vehicles to drive over or park on the drainfield or septic tank.
- Plant trees or shrubs on the drainfield. The roots from the plants could damage the system.
- Cover the drainfield with a hard surface such as concrete, asphalt or decks. The area should have only a grass cover.
- Overuse a kitchen garbage disposal unit. Heavy use adds large quantities of solids and shortens the time between septic tank pumpings.
- Use commercial septic tank additives. These products usually do not help, and some may hurt your system in the long run.

