



For more information,
please call the
Orange County Stormwater Program
at **1-877-89-SPILL**
(1-877-897-7455)
or visit
www.ocwatersheds.com

To report a sewage spill during
normal business hours
(8:00 AM to 5:00 PM), call the
Health Care Agency
at **(714) 433-6419**

To report a sewage spill **AFTER**
normal business hours, on
weekends or holidays,
call **(714) 628-7008**

For emergencies, dial 911.

The tips contained in this brochure provide useful
information to help prevent water pollution. If
you have other suggestions, please contact your
city's stormwater representatives or call the Orange
County Stormwater Program.



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Help Prevent Ocean Pollution:

Tips for Maintaining a Septic Tank System



The Ocean Begins
at Your Front Door



Tips for Maintaining a Septic Tank System

Households that are not served by public sewers usually depend on a septic tank system* to treat and dispose of wastewater. A well designed, installed and regularly maintained septic system can provide years of reliable service. However, when these systems fail to operate properly, significant damage can occur to property and the environment. The homeowner is responsible for these damages and may be subject to fines. Therefore, it is important to follow these simple tips when using a septic tank system:

Conserve Water

The more wastewater produced, the more the soil must absorb. By conserving water, the life of the drain field will be extended and the chance of a system failure is decreased.

Reduce your water use by:

- Using water saving devices
- Repairing leaky faucets and plumbing fixtures
- Reducing toilet reservoir volume or flow
- Taking shorter showers
- Washing only full loads of dishes and laundry

Never Flush Harmful Materials Into The Septic Tank

Grease, cooking oils, newspaper, paper towels, rags, coffee grounds, sanitary napkins and cigarettes do not easily decompose in the tank. Chemicals such as solvents, oils, paints and pesticides are harmful to the system's operation and may pollute the groundwater. For information on the proper disposal of household hazardous waste, call **1-800-CLEANUP**. Also, never use septic tank additives, commercial septic tank cleaners, yeast, sugar, etc. These products are not necessary and some may be harmful to your system.

Keep Runoff Away From The System

Water from surfaces such as roofs, driveways or patios should be diverted away from the septic tank and drain field area.

Protect The System From Damage

Keep traffic, such as vehicles, heavy equipment or livestock off your drain field or replacement area.

The pressure can compact the soil or damage pipes. Also check your septic system map prior to constructing buildings or a pool on the property. The area over the absorption field and tank should be left undisturbed with only grass on top. Trees or shrubs, which may clog and damage the drain, should be created from the area.

Keep Records

Know where the septic tank is and have a diagram of its location. Also, keep up-to-date, accurate maintenance records.

Inspect The System

Monitor the system yearly to insure it is not at an "early warning level." Inspect the drain field and down slope areas for odors, wet spots, or surfacing of sewage. This may be an early indication of a problem with the system. Also, have the system inspected by a licensed septic tank professional every three to five years.

Pump The Tank When Needed

Routine pumping can prevent failures, such as clogging and backup into the home.

Never Enter The Septic Tank

Poisonous gases or the lack of air can be fatal. A professional should complete any work to the tank.



* Contact your local collection agency or city for assistance in determining if your home is served by a septic tank.