

# Do's and Don'ts of Septic System Care and Maintenance

## ✓ Do

- Locate and maintain easy access to the components of your septic system
- Develop and follow a maintenance plan
- Be careful with what goes down the drain
- Get your septic tank pumped out every 2 – 5 years

## ✗ Don't

- Use cleaners and chemicals that can kill the good bacteria in the septic tank
- Park, drive, pave or put heavy objects on the drain field
- Plant trees or shrubs in the drain field
- Overload the system by running too many high-water use appliances at the same time

## Important Contact Information

### Island Health

Health Protection & Environmental Services  
355 - 11th Street, Courtenay BC V9N 1S4  
[www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/  
environment/sewerage-subdivision](http://www.islandhealth.ca/learn-about-health/environment/sewerage-subdivision)  
Tel: 250-331-8518

### Association of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of BC

200 - 4010 Regent Street, Burnaby BC V5C 6N2  
(List of professionals for Sewerage System Regulation)  
[www.egbc.ca/Member-Directories/  
Professionals-for-Sewerage-System-Regulation](http://www.egbc.ca/Member-Directories/Professionals-for-Sewerage-System-Regulation)  
Tel: 1-888-430-8035

### Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC

Onsite Wastewater Registration Program  
10767 - 148th Street, Surrey BC V3R 0S4  
(List of Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioners)  
<https://owrp.asttbc.org/rowp-finder>  
Tel: 604-585-2788 ext. 254

### Ministry of Health

1515 Blanshard Street, Victoria BC V8W 3C8  
[www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/  
environment/waste-management/sewage/  
onsite-sewage-systems](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/waste-management/sewage/onsite-sewage-systems)  
Tel: 1-800-663-7867

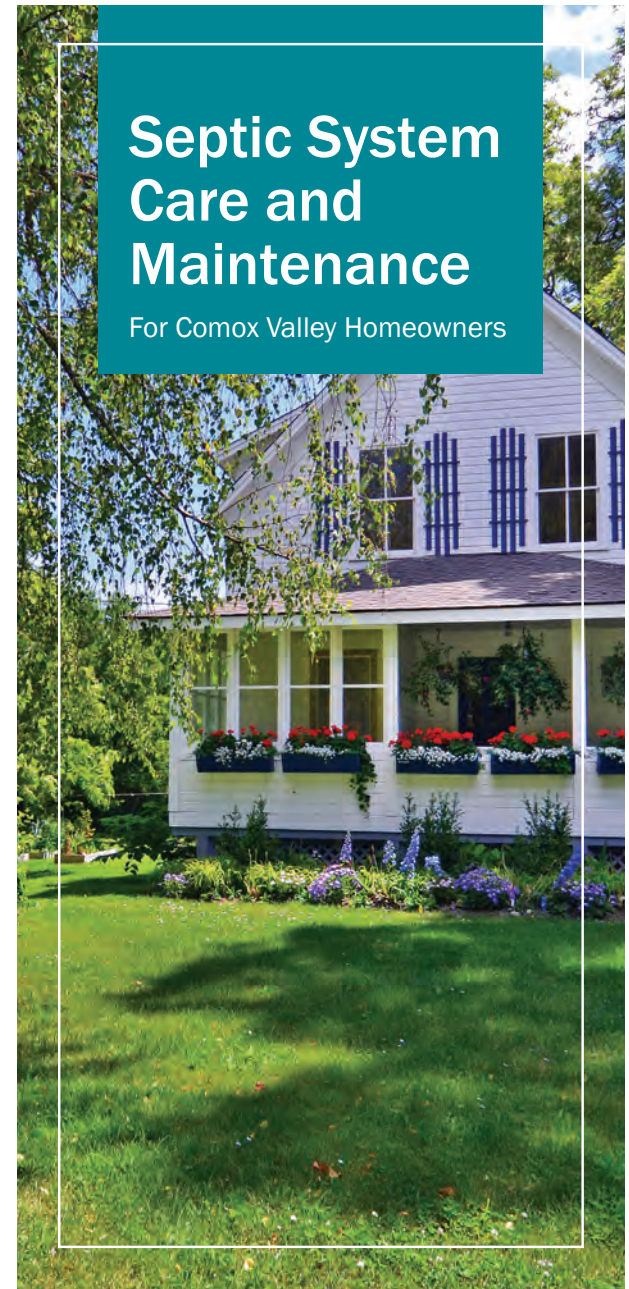
Learn more about septic system maintenance:

[comoxvalleyrd.ca/septic](http://comoxvalleyrd.ca/septic)

600 Comox Road, Courtenay, BC V9N 3P6  
Tel: 250-334-6000 | Fax: 250-334-4358  
Toll Free: 1-800-331-6007  
[comoxvalleyrd.ca](http://comoxvalleyrd.ca)

# Septic System Care and Maintenance

For Comox Valley Homeowners



# Septic System Maintenance

As a homeowner you are responsible for ensuring your septic system is being properly maintained. If your system was installed after 2005, you are required to have an Authorized Person conduct regular maintenance on your system according to your maintenance plan. Authorized Persons are qualified Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioners (ROWP) or Professional Engineers who meet the requirements of the Provincial regulation (see contact information).

Septic systems constructed before 2005 may not have a maintenance plan. If you do not have a maintenance plan for your system, an Authorized Person can create one for you.

## Protect Your Investment

Proper maintenance and care has a significant impact on how well your system works and how long it lasts. Monitor your septic system to ensure it is functioning properly and carry out regular system maintenance according to your maintenance plan. If you notice a problem with your system contact an Authorized Person immediately for advice on how to proceed.

## How Does My Septic System Work?

A septic system is used for homes not connected to a public sewer line. Septic systems can be an effective and safe way to treat domestic wastewater. Septic systems require proper use and regular maintenance to keep them working properly.

There are many different types of septic systems – all operate under the same principles.

Wastewater from appliances and plumbing fixtures in the home flows into the septic

tank. Light material floats to the surface, while solid waste settles at the bottom. The partially treated wastewater then flows into a distribution box and out into the drainfield. The wastewater begins to percolate into the soil through small holes in the pipes. Natural filtration and microorganisms in the soil remove any remaining harmful particles in the wastewater. The treated and cleansed wastewater passes into the groundwater and returns to the water cycle.

**Neglect or abuse of your septic system can cause it to fail. A failed system can:**

- Cause a serious health threat to your family, neighbours and pets.
- Pollute streams, lakes, shorelines and groundwater.
- Be very expensive and difficult to repair.

Watch for warning signs that your system isn't functioning properly. Wet, soggy ground or lush growth over the drain field, slow or backed-up drains and sewage odours around the property can be signs there's a problem with the system.

