

## WHAT IS AN ALTERNATIVE SEPTIC SYSTEM?

Alternative septic systems are engineered systems often utilized when soil conditions on a property do not allow for adequate treatment of sewage with a conventional septic system.

Alternative septic systems require additional maintenance beyond what is required for conventional septic systems. These systems should be maintained according to the manufacturer's specifications and documentation submitted as required by the Henrico Health Department.

Based on their maintenance requirements these systems are not required to comply with Henrico County's Septic Pump-out & Inspection Program.

**If you have any questions regarding your alternative septic system, please contact the Henrico Health Department at 804-501-4530.**

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ROUTINE MAINTENANCE?

- Helps protect the health of your family, community, and the environment.
- Failed systems can cost thousands of dollars to repair or replace.
- Failing systems can cause property values to decline.

For information regarding the maintenance of your septic system, please contact us at:



**804-501-5846**



**Septic-Systems@henrico.gov**

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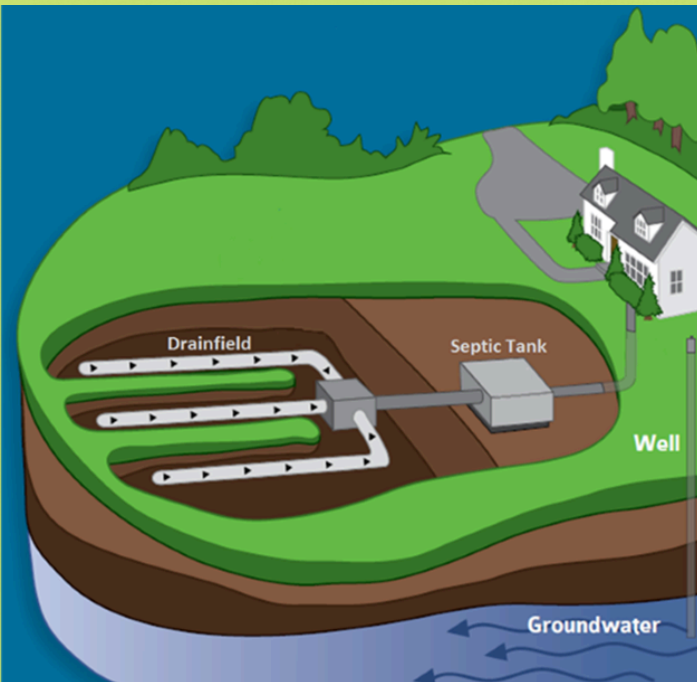
## MAINTAINING YOUR SEPTIC SYTEM...

**TO KEEP OUR WATERWAYS CLEAN.**



## WHAT IS A SEPTIC SYSTEM?

Septic systems are designed to collect, treat, and release wastewater from your home. Wastewater flows into your septic tank and separates; leaving heavier solids to collect on the bottom and lighter liquids, like soap scum, to float on the top. The clear water then flows out of your tank and into the drainfield where it is eventually filtered through the soil. This water will then be absorbed by plant roots or re-introduced into the groundwater table.



(Source U.S EPA)

## WHY SHOULD I MAINTAIN MY SEPTIC SYSTEM?

An improperly functioning septic tank can allow contaminated wastewater to enter surface and groundwater supplies. Failing septic systems can degrade water quality in streams and lakes through bacterial and viral contamination or nutrient overload. Groundwater is the source of drinking water for many people with septic tanks. Preventing drinking water contamination protects your health and the environment.

## IT'S THE LAW

Henrico County's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance (Chapter §24-5804(H)) requires all on-site septic system owners located within a Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area to **do one of the following once every five years:**

- 1. PUMP-OUT THE SEPTIC SYSTEM** and submit documentation of the pump-out
- OR...
- 2. HAVE A CERTIFIED OPERATOR OR ON-SITE SOIL EVALUATOR INSPECT THE SYSTEM** and submit documentation that the system has been inspected, is functioning properly, and does not need to be pumped out

A list of certified operators and on-site soil evaluators can be obtained from the Virginia Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation's (DPOR) website: <https://www.dpor.virginia.gov/LicenseLookup>

## WHAT SHOULD I KEEP OUT OF MY DRAIN?

- Do not put grease or chemicals down the drain. They can clog the system or eventually get into the groundwater.
- Avoid septic tank additives. These products are not necessary and may harm your system.
- Conserve water to avoid overloading the septic system. Repair any leaky faucets or toilets.
- Avoid using the garbage disposal. These devices quickly fill your septic system with solids, decrease their efficiency, and you will have to pump out your tank more frequently.

## PROTECT YOUR DRAINFIELD

- Do not drive, park, or build on top of your drainfield. This could reduce its ability to treat wastewater and may damage drain pipes within the field.
- Avoid planting shrubs with deep root systems or trees within or near the drainfield as their roots can damage pipes.