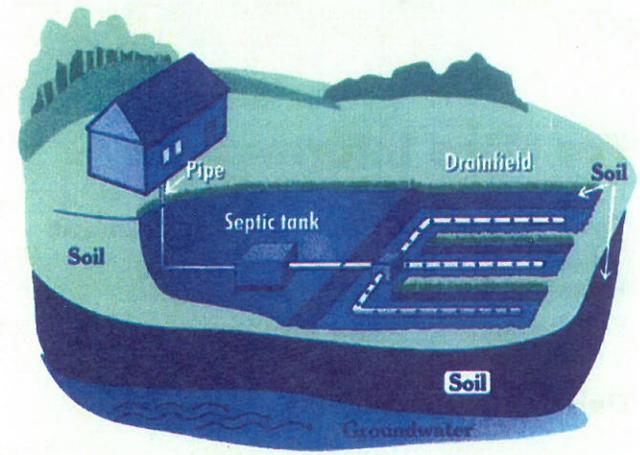


NEW LAW

Caring for Your SEPTIC SYSTEM

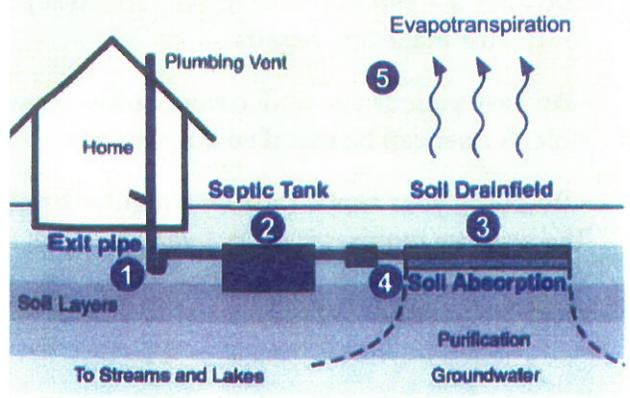
How the new law requiring pumping affects you. Why it is important to your health and your water quality to properly maintain your septic system.



The Town of Bedford, NY & Bedford 2020



Produced by EHI



New Septic Inspection Law:

If you live in Bedford, you probably have a septic system. Caring for this system properly not only protects your drinking water, but also the value of your house.

To protect the quality of the drinking water for Bedford and New York City (since Bedford is in the watershed for NYC's reservoirs), the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and Westchester County have developed a new septic inspection ordinance effective May 2011.

This law requires that you have a Westchester County licensed service provider pump your tank and inspect your system at least once every five years. The contractor is required to file a "Septic System Data Form" with the county and should give you a copy. The town will review the county's information and determine compliance with the new law.

For More Information:

Town of Bedford Planning Department

Phone: 666-4434

Email: planning@bedfordny.info

Online Resources

www.epa.gov/owm/septic

www.nesc.wvu.edu

www.rcap.org

www.nowra.org

How Your Septic System Works:

Your septic system is crucial to the quality of our drinking water, because anything you put down your drain or into your toilet goes into your septic system and winds up in the water we use for drinking, cooking and bathing.

Components

- A sewer line leads from the house to a septic tank. Here solids settle and bacteria cause them to decompose, much of them becoming liquefied.
- Liquid waste drains by pipes from the tank to the septic field. Here the soil organisms degrade the waste as it begins its journey down to the aquifer.
- Solid waste must be pumped out of the tank to allow room for material and air so that the bacteria may flourish.

Function

Bacteria degrade human waste. Anything that damages the bacteria, like bleach, will harm the system. The remaining waste is diluted as it is filtered through layers of soil and rock on its way to the aquifer.

Septic systems do not remove many of the wastewater contaminants, such as pharmaceuticals, volatile organic compounds such as glycol ethers in household cleansers, or most nitrates and phosphorus.

If a septic tank is not pumped regularly, the system will clog and the ground above it becomes saturated with wastewater that travels into nearby streams and reservoirs that supply drinking water.

Maintaining Your Septic System:

In addition to regular pumping

- **Don't** put anything down your sink or toilet that can harm the bacteria. This includes household cleansers, paint, bleach, feminine hygiene products and pharmaceuticals.
- **Don't** wash anything down the drain that you do not want eventually to go into your drinking water. This includes pharmaceuticals
- **Don't** drive over your septic tank or field (or let anyone else).
- **Don't** plant anything other than grass over your septic field. Roots of trees and shrubs can damage the infrastructure.
- **Don't** pave over your septic field. The bacteria need air to survive and rainwater should pass through the system.
- **Do** install your water softener correctly so that the backwash does not drain into the septic system.
- **Do** use more natural household cleansers.
- **Do** have a Westchester County licensed septic contractor make any repairs.
- **Do** have your septic tank cover readily accessible. A riser can be installed if necessary.
- **Do** pump your septic tank on a regular basis. The new law requires it every five years, but your contractor may recommend pumping more frequently.