

# C L E A N B U S I N E S S

## I N A W A T E R S H E D

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Portions of Foster, Glocester, Johnston and Scituate are a land area called the Scituate Reservoir Watershed. The Scituate Reservoir, lying in the lowest part of this land area, catches all water flowing from this watershed. The Scituate Reservoir is a major source of drinking water in Rhode Island.

THE SCITUATE RESERVOIR WATERSHED EDUCATION PROGRAM  
PASSING ON CLEAN WATER



## SEPTIC Systems Part Three- SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE

People usually don't think about septic systems... until they have problems.

Septic Systems dispose of wastewater from sinks, toilets, showers, washing machines and clothes washers. We count on them working everyday. You may have already handled the problems that occur when the Septic System backs up.

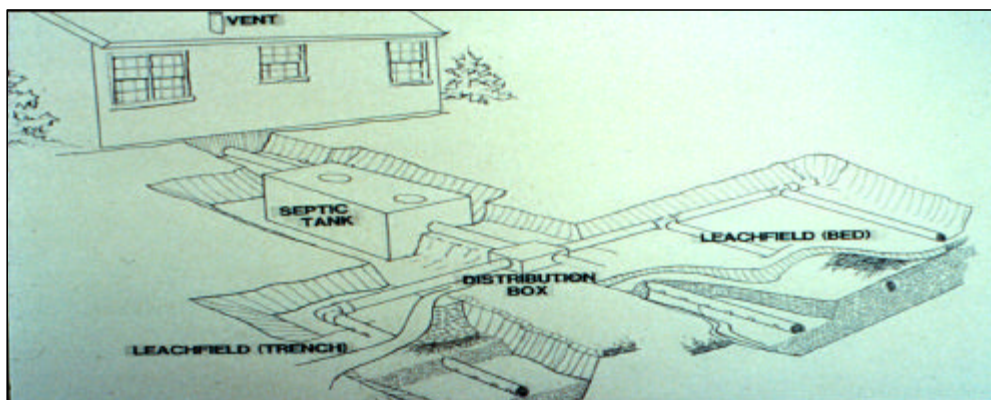
A failed Septic System can leak wastes into groundwater and nearby drinking wells. Drinking wells can become unsafe to use.

Experts say that the time and money put into Septic System maintenance can prevent greater costs and time spent repairing a Septic System.

This Clean Business Bulletin will give you some guidelines for Septic System maintenance and contacts for more information

A damaged Septic System can cost much more than costs of Septic System maintenance. Pollutants from a damaged Septic System can leak into ground water and enter nearby drinking wells. Serious problems result from this.

Understanding and using Septic System maintenance can prevent you from having these problems.



When a Septic System is working properly, wastewater leaves the building through a main pipe and enters the Septic Tank. Here, the solids separate from the wastewater and naturally occurring bacteria work to biologically break solids down. Fluids move on to the distribution box and are distributed to the Leachfield area. These fluids then drain downward into the soil. Pollutants are treated in the soil as cleaner water continues downward.

Septic Systems Should Be  
**INSPECTED** and **PUMPED**  
Regularly.

Prevent Problems

Consider a maintenance contract to have  
Septic System checked once a year.

**List of Registered Septic System Inspectors  
and for more information:**

[www.edc.uri.edu/ce/wq](http://www.edc.uri.edu/ce/wq)  
Onsite Wastewater Training Center

DECREASE THE AMOUNT OF  
SOLID WASTES  
ENTERING THE SEPTIC SYSTEM BY.

**Reduce** the use of **Garbage Disposal**  
systems.

Prevent **paper products**, other than toilet  
paper, from flushing down the toilet.

Use **Grease Traps**, if possible.

Install an **Effluent Screen** at outlet of Septic  
Tank to stop solids from entering leachfield.

For more information,  
call **URI Cooperative Extension**  
401-874-4558/5950

**Don't Use Septic System Additives.**  
They haven't been proven to work and  
may contaminate the groundwater.

BACTERIA BREAK DOWN  
WASTES

Anaerobic **Bacteria** (bacteria that  
live without oxygen) are capable of  
**breaking down** up to 80% of the  
**solid wastes** in the Septic Tank.  
These bacteria turn the solids into  
gases and liquids.

While remaining solids still need to  
be pumped out, these bacteria allow  
more time to pass before pumping is  
needed.

**Bleach, antibacterial soaps, and pe-  
troleum distillates will kill the bac-  
teria.**

Avoid washing unnecessary amounts  
of bleach down sinks and toilets  
into Septic Tank. Do not pour pe-  
troleum products down the sink.  
**Use green products when possible.**

**Use Bleach and Antibacterial  
Soaps Sparingly**

AVOID POURING DAIRY PRODUCTS  
AND COFFEE DOWN THE DRAIN LEAD-  
ING TO YOUR SANITARY SEPTIC SYS-  
TEM BECAUSE:

Dairy products like milk and melted  
ice cream, poured down the drain, are  
not easily broken down by bacteria.

DISPOSE OF DAIRY PRODUCTS AND  
COFFEE GRINDS WITH SOLID WASTE.

CONSULT A SEPTIC SYSTEM SERVICE  
PROVIDER IF YOU NEED TO DISPOSE OF  
LEFT OVER BREWED COFFEE REGU-  
LARLY, OR IF YOU ARE ADDING CLEAN-  
ING AGENTS OR OTHER DETRIMENTAL  
SUBSTANCES TO YOUR SYSTEM.

**Northern Rhode Island  
Conservation District**  
17 Smith Avenue  
Greenville, RI 02828  
(phone) 401-949-1480  
(Fax) 401-949-4436  
[www.landwaterconnection.org](http://www.landwaterconnection.org)

**OTHER HELPFUL  
CONTACTS**

**Providence Water**  
552 Academy Avenue  
Providence, RI 02908  
(phone) 401-521-6300  
[www.provwater.com](http://www.provwater.com)