



# On-Site Sewage/Septic Systems and Source Water Protection

Most rural homes and cottages use a septic system. When working properly, septic systems can provide a safe and reliable way to treat your household wastewater. If you do not properly care for your septic system it could contaminate the environment and put your family and neighbour's health at risk.

## You are responsible to ensure your septic system is in good working order by:

- Pumping your septic tank every three to five years.
- Putting an effluent filter on the outflow pipe leading from the tank to the leaching bed.
- Cleaning effluent filters annually.
- Replacing a damaged septic tank (permit required).
- Making sure all pumps and alarms are working (if your system has them).
- Learn more about septic system maintenance at [durham.ca/SepticSystems](http://durham.ca/SepticSystems)



Regular inspections by a licensed professional should be performed at least every three years. Inspections are important for the proper care of your sewage system and can identify ongoing or potential problems.

Inspections can help to ensure a long, useful lifespan for your sewage system, benefitting you and protecting your community's drinking water.

In some areas of the province, maintenance inspections are mandatory. Contact your municipality to find out who enforces septic system requirements in your area.

## Part of caring for your septic system is being careful about what goes into your system.

- Avoid putting hazardous household waste, such as paint, fat, oil, grease, laundry detergent with phosphates, and nail polish remover down your drain. They can damage your septic system and seep into ground water through your leaching bed.
- Keep items such as dental floss, feminine hygiene products and food solids out of your system. They can build up and clog your leaching bed and pipes.
- Use efficient water softeners to reduce the discharge of salt to the septic system.
- Ensure outdoor taps are not connected to the softened water line.

The Regional Municipality of Durham, Works Department  
If you require this information in an accessible format, please contact  
905-668-7711 ext. 3488 [durham.ca/SWP](http://durham.ca/SWP)

