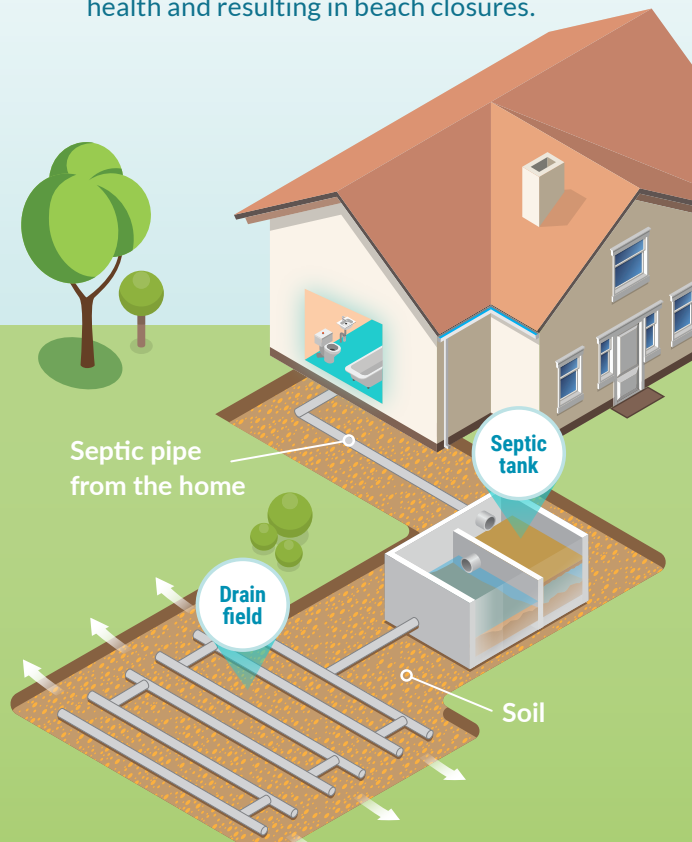


# SEPTIC TANKS

Homes not connected to the public sewer system generally have a septic tank system to treat and dispose of wastewater. Wastewater and sewage are collected in a tank where they are slowly broken down through natural processes. The water is then released via drain lines where it infiltrates into the ground and is further purified. If a septic system fails, significant property and environmental damage can occur, which homeowners are responsible for. Prevent costly emergencies such as pipe breaks and leaks by properly maintaining your septic system. If your system fails, sewage containing harmful bacteria and viruses can flow untreated to our waterways becoming a hazard to human health and resulting in beach closures.



## Who is H<sub>2</sub>OC?

**H<sub>2</sub>OC is YOU.** H<sub>2</sub>OC is also a cooperative stormwater program which includes all 34 cities in Orange County, the County of Orange, and Orange County Flood Control District (OCFCD). Clean and healthy beaches, creeks, rivers, bays, wetlands, and ocean are important to Orange County. H<sub>2</sub>OC provides resources to residents and businesses to encourage personal action and prevent polluted runoff from entering our waterways.

PROPERLY MANAGE YOUR  
**SEPTIC SYSTEM**  
TO PROTECT OUR WATERWAYS



## Join Us

Visit [h2oc.org](http://h2oc.org) to learn more about runoff, water pollution, and how you can be the solution to runoff pollution and protect our water resources.

## Contact

☎ **24-hour Pollution Reporting Hotline:**  
877-89-SPILL (877-897-7455)

📱 **24-hour Pollution Reporting Website:**  
[myOCeServices.ocgov.com](http://myOCeServices.ocgov.com)

*For emergencies, dial 911*

[\\*oclandfills.com/hazardous-waste](http://oclandfills.com/hazardous-waste)



## Only Allow Wastewater in the Septic Tank

- ✓ Anything other than wastewater, such as cooking oils, solvents, and cigarettes, can cause problems with your septic tank and pollute the groundwater.
- ✓ Place solid materials including sanitary products, cotton balls, baby wipes, and flushable wipes in the trash since these will not break down and may clog pipes. Only septic safe toilet paper should enter the septic system.
- ✓ Take chemicals including unused cleaners, bleach, and medication to a local household hazardous waste collection facility.\*
- ✓ Septic tank additives such as commercial septic tank cleaners, yeast, and sugar are not necessary and can be harmful to your system.

Using excess water can decrease the life of the drain field and increases the chances of a system failure.

## Monitor Water Use

- ✓ Repair leaking faucets and plumbing fixtures.
- ✓ Take shorter showers.
- ✓ Only wash full loads of dishes and laundry.



For more information, visit:  
<https://h2oc.org/resources/pollution-prevention-for-residents/septic-system-maintenance/>  
or scan the QR code.

## Perform Regular Maintenance

- ✓ Have your septic system inspected by a licensed septic tank professional every three to five years. Never enter the septic tank yourself, as the poisonous gases or lack of air can be fatal.
- ✓ Inspect the drain field and downslope areas for odors, wet spots, or surfacing sewage. Contact a licensed professional immediately if you see these warning signs.
- ✓ Pump your septic system routinely to prevent failures like backups into the home. Contact a licensed professional to determine your optimal pumping frequency since it depends on your tank size and the number of people in your household.

It is critical to leave the area over the drain field undisturbed to prevent pipe damage or waste from flowing into the storm drain system.

## Protect the Septic System

- ✓ Keep traffic of vehicles or livestock away from the drain field.
- ✓ Ensure runoff from your roof, driveway, or patio flows away from the septic tank and drain field area.
- ✓ Do not plant trees or large shrubs above or within several feet of the drain field.



Tank being professionally pumped.



Drain field being installed.

