

**HOMEOWNER INFORMATION
PROVIDED BY**

**BAKER SEPTIC
INSTALLATIONS, INC.**

Family Owned and Operated Since 1947

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The mission of Baker Septic Installations, Inc, and all associated companies, is to serve the residents and businesses of Highlands and surrounding counties with integrity and respect. We will provide quality products and services in a responsible and timely manner. Our business will operate by standards that are environmentally friendly so that we protect the valuable resources of our community for future generations to come.

To the Homeowner from Bob Baker, President Baker Septic Installations, Inc.

CONGRATULATIONS on the purchase of your new home! I'm pleased to inform you that your contractor chose us to install your septic system. This pamphlet is provided to give you important information to keep your septic system operating properly.

Quite frequently people ask me how long will the septic system or drain field last. I have to tell them "I don't know" because a system's life is determined by the following three factors:

- the amount of water used in the household,
- **the quality of the waste water going into the system, and**
- the type of ground conditions that exist around the system..

In my opinion, the second item is the most important factor. The quality of the waste water that goes into the septic is determined by you, the owner. Obviously then, you should take some precautions to keep the system operating properly. To help you with this task, I have included some helpful information.

One other item I would like to cover is the effluent filter which is installed in your septic tank. This filter is mandated by state and county building codes. The filter is located in the outlet baffle tee at the outlet end of the septic tank. This filter will need periodic cleaning. How often the filter needs cleaning depends on the quality of waste water exiting the household, but I would suggest at least once a year, you, as the homeowner, can do this or we will be happy to assist you for a standard service charge.

If there is any other information, questions, or help that I or my staff can give you in relation to your septic system, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Robert L. "Bob" Baker

YOUR SEPTIC TANK

What It Is and How It Works

The septic tank primarily is a holding tank, generally made of concrete or fiberglass and usually holds the amount of waste that will flow from a house in a 24-hour period. This waste comes from the kitchen sink, laundry tub, washing machine, and bathrooms.

Some health departments insist that flows from washing machines go into a receptacle other than the septic tank. The reason—to avoid large surges going into the septic system. Also, some feel it is wise to keep harsh washing powders from adversely affecting the bacterial action in septic tanks.

The material going into the septic tank is divided into three general categories: (1) sludge that sinks to the bottom of the tank, (2) solid waste (lighter in weight than water) that floats near the top of the tank, and (3) water that fills the tank.

The solid waste is worked on by bacteria (anaerobic) and is broken down into gas and liquids. The gas is released through the vent system of the house and the liquids originally flow by gravity into the drain field.

In theory, this process can go on indefinitely if the system is properly maintained. This maintenance will be discussed later.

Remember, the septic tank normally is filled to its liquid top level in order to function properly.

A drain field is a trench or bed excavated just beyond the septic tank to a sufficient depth to provide natural drainage for the effluent (the technical name of the partially treated liquid coming out of the septic tank).

The ability of the ground to accommodate the liquid is determined by the amount of design flow and the type of the soil in which the drain field lies. Usually, the more pervious the soil, the smaller the drain field. Often, impervious soil must be removed from the site and replaced with more suitable material. The depth of the drain field is determined by the type of soil at various depths plus the elevation of the water table. It is necessary to maintain a safe vertical distance between the bottom of the drain field and the water table.

Perforated pipes run the entire length of the drain field over a bed of filter media (usually rock or coarse sand) having a minimum depth of 12 inches.

Solids are prevented from flowing from the septic tank to the drain field by a baffle or a “T” at the inside of the outlet end of the tank. In theory, only liquids are removed from the septic tank in this way, thus recycling your household liquids back to the ground.

Research is constantly being carried out to discover a more efficient baffle to minimize the amount of minute solid particles allowed into the drain field. These solids, once in the drain field can cause clogging of the media and eventually, drain field failure.

Overloading

A faulty plumbing fixture such as a running toilet, with which you are no doubt familiar, can force hundreds of gallons of wasted water to go through the tank and into the drain field, thus causing saturation of the earth. Any leaks that develop in the plumbing fixtures should be corrected immediately. **A leaking faucet or toilet tank, no matter how small the leak, eventually will result in complete saturation and failure of the drain field.**

Washing Machines

Many residential clothes washing machines are connected to septic tanks. Washing machines are responsible for the highest volume of water going out of your house at one time. This obviously will have a great effect on your septic tank, especially if two or three washes are done consecutively. **A continuous deluge of water could create a hazard to the smooth operation of your septic tank system.** How can you use your washing machine and still not overtax your septic tank? The one thing you can do is to space your washings throughout the week rather than several loads on just one or two days. Another solution to washing machine heavy surges is the dual septic tank system (one for gray water and one for black water waste, as discussed in a previous section).

Grease

If there is any one factor that causes more trouble in septic tanks and drain fields, it is grease. For one thing, the type of bacteria that lives, eats and multiplies in septic tanks does not thrive at all in solidified grease.

Remember, grease is not sewage, it is garbage. So keep it out of the sewage system.

Awareness

The septic tank is a patented invention, relatively new in concept (patented in London, England, around 1900). Most communities have septic tank contractors who can inspect your system periodically. **Just be sure the contractor is licensed and reputable.** Effective October 1, 1988, any Florida septic tank contractor (those who install, repair, modify, maintain or pump onsite sewage disposal systems) must be registered with the Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services. He or she must have passed an examination and must renew his or her registration annually by attending six hours of education. Another reliable check is to determine if your contractor is a member of the Florida Septic Tank Association.

Warning Signals

- Sluggishness when flushing toilet
- Any plumbing backups
- Gurgling sounds in the plumbing
- Grass in the yard growing faster and greener in one particular area
- Ground mushy underfoot
- Obnoxious odors inside or outside
- Low spots beginning to appear in yard, whether or not any of the above symptoms have appeared

Most Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Q. Should I put a cake of yeast in my septic tank?

A. No! As long as human and kitchen waste continue to be flushed and drained into the septic tank, nothing else need be added! Yeast is of no value.

Q. Do I need to add bacteria to my septic tank after a pump out?

A. No. The human waste from your body will provide all the bacteria necessary.

Q. Can a clogged drain field be repaired by cleaning or the infusion of enzymes?

A. No. The only remedy for a nonfunctioning drain field is replacement. While some contractors continue to advertise enzymes and chemical treatment to revitalize a drain field, there is no conclusive data to support their effectiveness.

Q. How often should I have my septic tank pumped out?

A. The intervals vary from home to home. A septic tank should be opened and inspected every two to three years by your septic tank contractor. The contractor can determine whether or not it needs pumping by viewing the condition of the tank.

Q. Is it all right to flush sanitary napkins down a commode serviced by a septic tank?

A. No. These napkins are made of cellulose, a non-biodegradable product (the bacteria in the tank cannot work on this type of material.) As a matter of fact, the less paper of any kind flushed down the commode, the better.

Q. Is it ok to have a garbage disposal in a kitchen that is connected to a septic tank?

A. Yes. But extreme care should be exercised not to allow grease or non-biodegradable products such as fruit peelings to get into the disposal system.

Q. Can I plant trees or shrubbery over my septic tank or drain field?

A. Try not to do this. If the tree or bush has a strong root system, it can choke your drain field. Roots can also get into the septic tank reducing its capacity and possibly blocking the inlet or outlet.

What This Means To You

If your house is served by a septic tank, you have a modern, economical, sanitary system of waste disposal. However, to maintain these features, the septic tank needs care and maintenance just as much as your appliances, roof, floors, walls, and heating/air conditioning. The consequences of the lack of care can be very unpleasant and costly. An inspection or pump out are reasonable preventions. Replacing a drain field can be very expensive.

Do not abuse your system, and it will not abuse you!

PLEASE USE THE MAINTENANCE RECORD ON THE BACK OF THIS DOCUMENT TO TRACK AND MONITOR YOUR SYSTEM SERVICE AND WORK.

