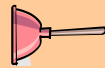


# Septic System Overview



## Do I Have a Septic System?

Homes with a septic system have a tank buried in the yard with an access pipe located at the surface of the ground. Also, a drainfield will be buried beyond the septic tank. If your water is not supplied by a city or county drinking water system, chances are you have a septic tank. Contact your local County Health Department if you are unable to determine whether or not you have a septic system.

## How Does it Work?

Septic systems are designed to safely use natural processes to treat and dispose of the wastewater generated in your home.

## Steps to Wastewater Treatment:

1. Wastewater flows out of your home and into a septic tank buried in the yard. Both "greywater" (waste from kitchen sink, bath water, laundry, etc) and "blackwater" (toilet wastes) is delivered to the system.
2. Bacteria in the tank break down wastes (tanks should be routinely pumped to remove accumulated solids).
3. The liquid inside the tank flows to a series of underground pipes, called a drainfield, that release treated wastewater into the soil beneath your yard.
4. The liquid waste is decomposed and absorbed by the soil.

\*If a septic system is not properly maintained, raw waste may appear at the surface of the drainfield and contaminate the water supply.\*

*The Mission of the Silver Creek Watershed Improvement Project is to Protect and Conserve the Natural Resources of S.C. Watershed through Education, Monitoring, and Planning, Thereby Creating a Healthy Watershed. If you are interested in learning more contact :*

Silver Creek Watershed Improvement Project  
Clark County Soil and Water Conservation District  
9608 Highway 62, Suite 2  
Charlestown, IN 47111  
812-256-2330 ext. 110  
renae.smith@in.nacdnet.net  
www.mysilvercreekwatershed.weebly.com



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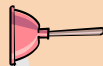
## Get a Handle on Your Septic System and the Water Quality of Silver Creek Watershed

Good Water Quality in the Creeks, Lakes,  
& Streams of Silver Creek Watershed  
Starts at Home!

Maintaining Your Septic System is a Step  
in the Right Direction.



## What's the Big Deal?



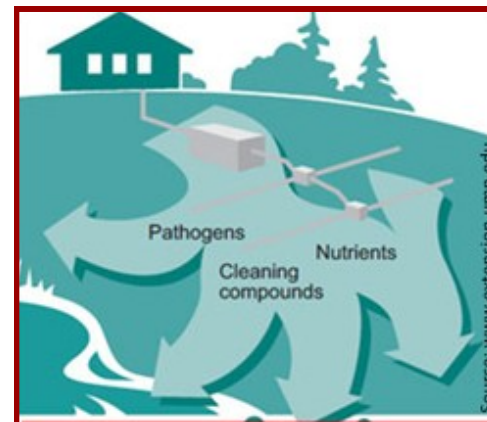
To work properly septic systems must be built in the right place. Once they are installed proper maintenance is required. Keeping your system working properly is a wise investment for many reasons including:

**Health:** Wastewater can contain bacteria, viruses and household chemicals. The safe disposal of sewage containing these contaminants prevents the spread of infection and disease and protects groundwater. If groundwater becomes contaminated a significant threat is posed to wells and drinking water.

**Environment:** Malfunctioning septic systems can release excess nutrients into our streams and rivers. This contamination can stimulate algae growth; excessive algae growth harms oxygen levels thus killing or affecting fish and other aquatic organisms and reducing stream quality.

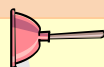


**Economic:** Failed septic systems are expensive to replace or repair. They can even cause a decline in property values.



Improperly functioning septic systems can allow excess nutrients, pathogens, and other unwanted elements into our watershed.

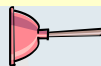
## What Can I Do?



### 8 Quick Tips to Proper Septic System Maintenance:

1. Inspect your septic system annually.
2. Pump out your septic system every 3 to 5 years, using a licensed septic hauler.
3. Avoid or reduce the use of garbage disposals, they can contribute unnecessary solids to your septic system causing them to need pumping more frequently.
4. Avoid drainfield failures by avoiding hydraulic overloading. Installing water-efficient shower heads, faucets, and toilets help limit wastewater levels and reduce the likelihood of septic system overflow.
5. Don't make or allow repairs to your septic system without obtaining the required health department assistance and permit.
6. Don't plant anything over your soil treatment area except grass.
7. Divert roof drains and surface water from driveways away from the septic system. Keep the water from sump pumps, water softeners and foundation drains out of the septic system.
8. Don't use your toilet as a trash can! Chemicals can corrode septic system pipes and might not be completely removed during the filtration process. They may also interfere with the proper function of your septic system. Keep the following items OUT of your septic system:  
*Grease, Disposable Diapers, Tampons, Gasoline, Oil, Paint, Paint Thinner, Pesticides, Antifreeze, Etc.*

## Report a Nonworking Septic System



To report a nonworking septic system in the Silver Creek Watershed visit [www.mysilvercreekwatershed.weebly.com](http://www.mysilvercreekwatershed.weebly.com). Click on the *Septic Systems and Water Quality* tab on the left of the website screen and fill out the form at the bottom of the page. The report will be sent to the appropriate county health official who will investigate the report.

Some signs of a nonworking septic system include:

- *Foul Odors*
- *Wet Spongy Ground or Puddles of Water Near a Drainfield*
- *Lush Plant Growth That Appears Near a Leaky Tank or DrainField*
- *Fixtures that Drain Slowly*

## For More Information on Septic Systems in Your County Contact:

**Clark County Department of Health**  
812-282-7521

**Floyd County Department of Health**  
812-948-4726

**Scott County Department of Health**  
812-752-8455

**Silver Creek Watershed Improvement Project**  
812-256-2330 ext. 110