



MAINTAINING YOUR WELL & SEPTIC SYSTEM

About Your Septic System

The septic tank is an underground, watertight container that is usually made with concrete, fiberglass, or polyethylene. It holds wastewater long enough for solids to settle out to form sludge, and oil and grease to float to the surface as scum. It also allows partial decomposition of solid materials.



BAT & Septic Tanks

Best Available Technology or BAT units are specifically designed for nitrogen reduction. These units are pre-treated and include electrical and mechanical components such as pumps, blowers, and alarms. BAT units can replace or work in conjunction with an existing septic tank.

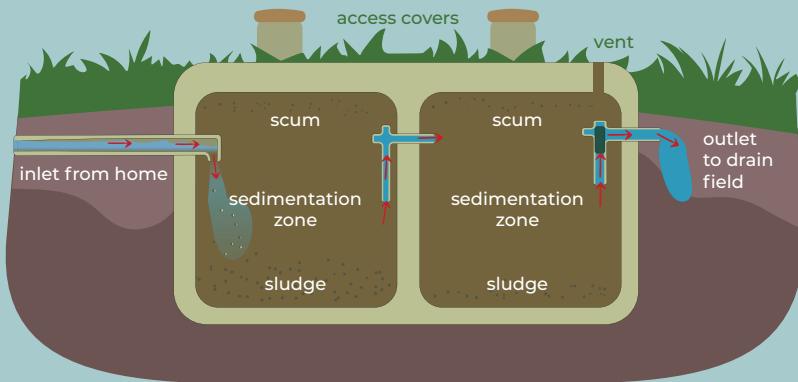


Contact your local health department for more information about Best Available Technology (BAT) units.

Responsible Septic System Ownership

If you have a septic system on your property, maintaining it is your responsibility! Proper septic system maintenance such as having your septic system inspected and pumped out every 5 years, has several benefits to the property owner:

- 1 A well-maintained septic system is less likely to break down and require costly repair.
- 2 Maintaining your septic system protects your home investment—if you sell your home, your septic system must be in good working order.
- 3 Maintaining your septic system protects the groundwater and drinking water supply.



How Does A Septic System Work?

Compartments and a T-shaped outlet in the septic tank prevent the sludge and scum from leaving the tank and moving into the drainfield area. Wastewater exits the septic tank and is discharged into the drainfield for further treatment by the soil. Microbes in the soil digest or remove most contaminants from wastewater before it reaches the groundwater.

Septic System Tips

Do:

- Inspect your system **yearly** and pump out your system every 5 years.
- Only flush human waste and toilet paper. Ensure all items that are flushed down the septic tank can be broken down by bacteria in the tank.
- Plant only grass over the drainfield.

Do Not:

- Dispose of hazardous wastes in sinks or toilets.
- Use large amounts of bacteria-killing toxins like bleaches, household cleaning products, and disinfectants.
- Drive or park vehicles on top of the drainfield.
- Plant trees or shrubs over the drainfield.



Well Maintenance Tips

Consider the proximity of your well to possible pollution sources. The geology of the area may affect the risk of contamination.

Protect your well from:

Problems near your well such as flooding, or land disturbances. Pollution or animal waste around well head.

Test and inspect your well for:

- Proper cap each year.
- Damage to casing each year.
- Bacteria each year.
- Harmful chemicals every two to three years.

Test and inspect your well when:

You replace or repair part of your well system.

You notice a change in your well water's taste, color, smell or water quality.

Septic System Pump-Out Rebate Program

The Septic System Pump-Out Rebate Program is a program for Frederick County residents who have their septic tanks pumped out by a licensed hauler every five years. Rebates will be available for homeowners who pump-out their septic systems in the amount of \$75 regardless of the amount billed for the pump-out service. Residents are encouraged to apply for the rebate on a first come first served basis due to funding availability.

Please visit www.frederickcountymd.gov/septicrebate for more information.

Resources

Environmental Health Services

Frederick County Health Department
350 Montevue Lane, Frederick, MD 21702
(301) 600-1726



Contact your state or local health department to test your water for bacteria, or to get in touch with a licensed lab in your area that can test for harmful substances.



Maintaining Your Well and Septic System is a publication of the Frederick County Division of Energy and Environment. For more information on this program, visit www.frederickcountymd.gov/septicrebate, email us at sustainability@frederickcountymd.gov, or call at 301.600.1416. Sustainable Frederick County is on [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and [Facebook](#).