

# MAINTAINING YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

**EVALUATE** every 1-3 years & **PUMP** when solids reach 1/3 of tank volume

Keep all vehicles, heavy equipment and farm animals off the drainfield area. The only exception is the lawn mower.

Solids sink to the bottom of the septic tank and need to be pumped when they reach 1/3 of the tank volume.

## DRAINFIELD

Partially treated water exits the tank and is distributed into the drainfield. The soil in the drainfield removes bacteria and viruses from the liquid waste.

## SEPTIC TANK

The septic tank is buried in your yard. This is where solids and liquids separate. Installing risers from the buried tank to the yard surface can make access easier.

## Why Maintain Your Septic System?

### SAVE MONEY

Evaluations help to find small problems that can be fixed before they become big, expensive problems.

### FAMILY HEALTH

Sewage contains harmful pathogens that can make people sick. Malfunctioning septic systems can leak raw sewage into your yard and nearby waters, leaving family and neighbors at risk.

### COMMUNITY BENEFIT

Keeping your system in good operating condition prevents sewage from entering drinking water sources, and creeks, rivers, and bays used for recreation and shellfish harvest.

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### Be water efficient and spread out water use.

When too much water enters the tank in a short period of time, the tank doesn't function correctly. Solids don't have enough time to separate and can be flushed into the drainfield.

**Avoid pouring fats, grease and food solids down the drain.** Only flush natural waste and toilet paper. Limit the amount of household cleaners that you use. Things like paints, anti-freeze, medications, bleach, and other disinfectants do NOT belong in your septic system.

Image courtesy: Whatcom County Public Works and Health Department