

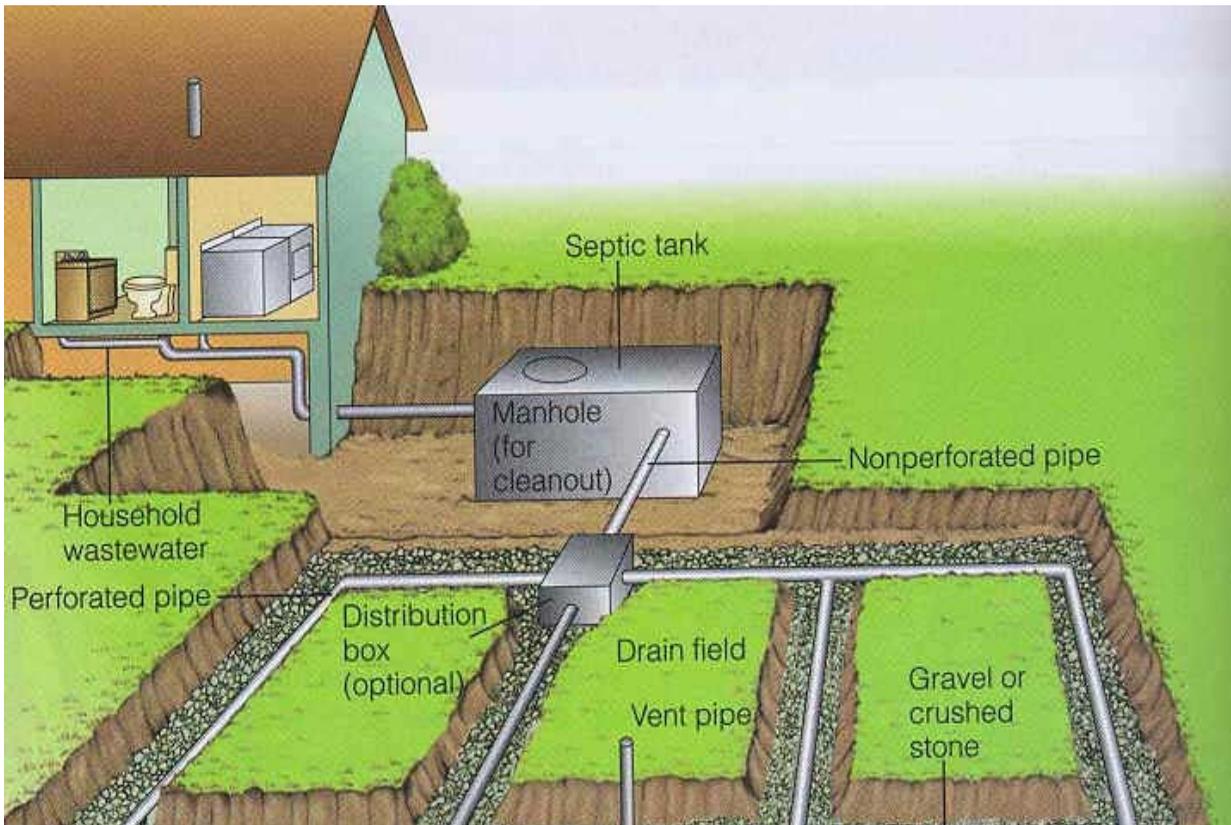
What is a septic system and how does it work?

A septic system is a method of disposing household wastewater in areas where public sewers are not available. The standard type of septic system involves:

Septic tank - to hold wastewater from toilets and drainpipes until solids settle out in the tank

Leach field - a system of pipes or chambers that distribute the remaining liquid waste underground over a large area

The wastewater in the leach field then percolates through the soil. This process filters the wastewater, which helps to clean the water. The goal is to make sure that this filtration through the soil is sufficient to clean the wastewater before it reaches drinking water wells or surface waters.



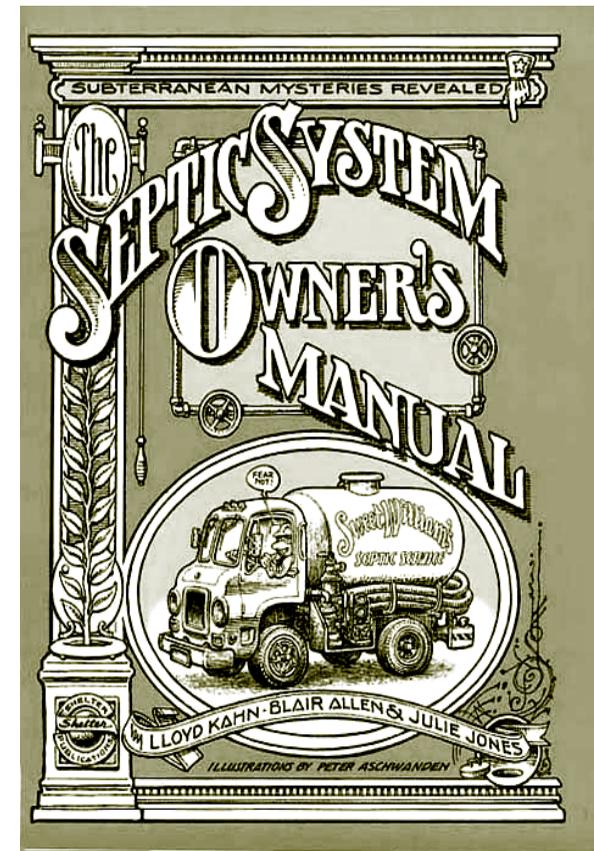
The Laramie County Conservation District works with local stakeholders to identify water quality concerns and to improve local water quality conditions. Failed septic systems can contribute to water quality concerns throughout the Crow Creek Watershed and the surrounding areas. This brochure is a public outreach effort that was recommended by the Crow Creek Watershed Steering Committee through the Crow Creek Watershed Plan.



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A Septic Guide for Laramie County Residents

Is a septic system permit required and how much does it cost?

Laramie County regulations require that a permit be issued by the Cheyenne-Laramie County Health Department prior to making repairs or constructing a septic system. A permit and inspection fee of \$150.00 is required when an application is submitted.

Permitting process for Laramie County

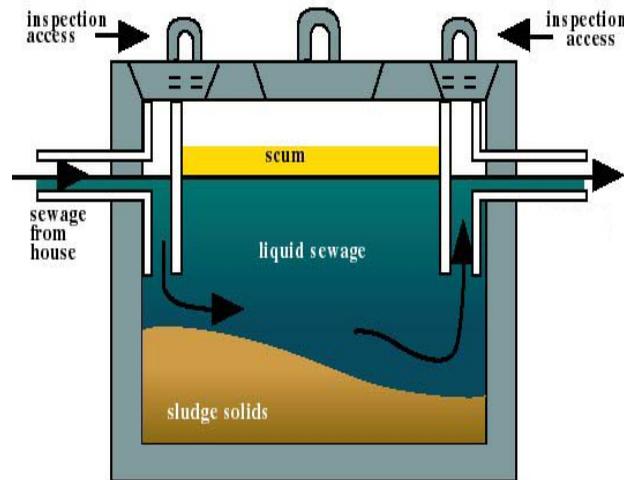
Through the Small Wastewater Program, Environmental Health provides inspections, education and consultations on small wastewater systems. All small wastewater systems (residential and commercial) must be permitted prior to installation, repair or modification.

The Division of Environmental Health is charged with permitting all small wastewater systems generating less than 2,000 gallons of domestic waste per day. The Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Water Quality Division permits larger wastewater systems and waste that is not considered domestic.

Cheyenne-Laramie County Health Department Environmental Health
100 Central Avenue, Cheyenne, WY
(307) 633-4000
www.laramiecounty.com/departments/health/small_wastewater.asp

What should I do if I need a septic system?

Contact the Environmental Health Division of the Cheyenne-Laramie County Health Department for a permit. They will refer you to contractors who do soil tests according to current regulations. Upon receiving the soil tests from the contractor, you submit that information with an application. Environmental Health will then do an inspection of your site to insure the system can be constructed in compliance with state and county regulations and that soil and groundwater conditions are satisfactory for a septic system.



Once your septic system has been constructed by a licensed septic system contractor, Environmental Health will perform a follow-up inspection to insure that the system meets the permit conditions and current regulations.



Why do I need to have my septic tank pumped?

The cost of a septic system is a major investment. To protect that investment and prolong the life of your system, it is necessary to have the septic tank pumped out every 3 to 4 years.

Since all solids in your household wastewater settle out in the tank, it's important to have the tank pumped to avoid having sludge block the pipes that allows the liquids to move on to the leach field for filtration. Failure to routinely pump the septic tank may result in the clogging of your leach field and cause a premature malfunction of the system. **More information on maintenance is available from Environmental Health (633-4000).**

Remember, the pump truck needs access to the septic tank!

What should I do if my septic system is failing?

Contact the Environmental Health Division. They will consult with you on the causes for failure and advise you on how the failure can be remedied. A repair permit is required before beginning any system upgrade.

What can I plant near my drain field?

In general, shallow-rooted herbaceous plants (annuals, perennials, grasses) are best. Because the leach field is relatively shallow, roots from trees and shrubs can clog the pipes and seriously damage the system. Keep trees and shrubs away from the septic tank and generally 50 feet away from the drain field for most systems. This practice will also reduce the chance for snow drifts to settle over the leach field.



Planting vegetables in the drain field can be risky because of bacterial and viral contamination from the effluent. A properly operating system will not contaminate the soil with disease-causing organisms, but it is often difficult to determine if a field is operating as it should. It is best to plant vegetables in another location and raised beds should not be built over the leach field.

Not in My Septic System!

X Cloggers
diapers, cat litter, cigarette filters, coffee grounds, grease, feminine hygiene products, etc.

X Killers
household chemicals, gasoline, oil, pesticides, antifreeze, paint, etc.

Your septic system is YOUR responsibility!

ANTIBIOTICS kill beneficial bacteria and damage septic systems!