

Maintaining a septic system:

- Pump septic tank once every 3 to 5 years. More frequently with more occupants and if you have a garbage disposal.
- Use water efficiently: turn off faucets when brushing teeth or shaving, run dishwasher and clothes washer with full loads, install high efficiency plumbing fixtures and appliances.
- Be mindful of what you flush. Garbage and other slow-to-degrade items are hard on septic systems.
- Plant grass over drain field. Trees and their roots may clog and damage the drain field.
- Don't drive or park vehicles on any part of your system.
- Divert rain water from gutters and driveways away from your drain field.

Mercer County Health Department Environmental Services

900 N. College St
Harrodsburg, KY 40330

Phone: 859-734-2229
Fax: 859-734-2968

health.mercercounty.ky.gov

Environmental Fees

Soil Evaluation	\$175
Permit to Install Septic System	\$175
Existing Septic Sys Inspection	\$100

Homeowner's Guide to Septic Systems



Mercer County
Health Department



Septic system with a drainfield

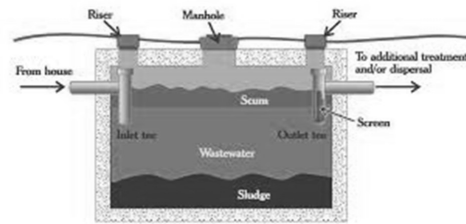


Components and Care

All septic systems have a septic tank and a secondary treatment system: a drain field, an evapotranspiration lagoon, or a constructed wetland cell. The systems rely on the sun to evaporate and plants and soil to clean and filter the effluent. These systems must maintain separation distances from restrictive horizons in the soil to be effective and not contaminate the groundwater.

The Septic Tank:

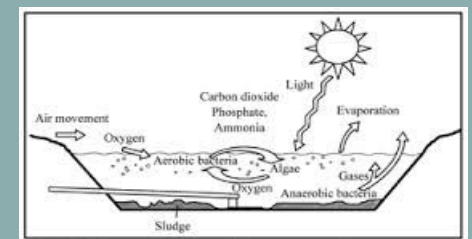
The septic tank is a buried, watertight concrete or plastic tank that retains the wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle to the bottom (forming sludge) and oils and greases to float to the surface (as scum). This material is retained in the tank by vertical baffles. The natural bacteria in the septic tank begin to breakdown and digest the organic material found in the wastewater. Only the treated liquid (effluent) found in the center level of the tank flows out of the septic tank and into the absorption field.



It is important to inspect your tank to ensure the baffles are in good condition and have it pumped every couple of years.

Wastewater Treatment Options:

Typically, in this area of Kentucky, we see three types of secondary treatment: a drain field (leaching chambers or rock trenches), an evapotranspiration lagoon or a constructed wetland cell + drain field. Drain fields have subsurface lines designed to take equal amounts of effluent and filter it thru the soil. Lagoons are ponds with special construction requirements designed to hold effluent long enough for evaporation and plant life to clean the water. The constructed wetland cell works in a similar fashion, relying on plant life to clean and filter the effluent.



Evapotranspiration lagoon