

HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO ON-SITE SEWAGE SYSTEMS

WATER SAVING GUIDELINES

If we had to carry buckets of water from the river or well, we'd think twice about how best to use our supply. An average family of four uses 255 gallons of water indoors per day. Outdoor water use can double or triple this amount. That adds up to many trips to the well.

If you put less water into your on-site sewage system, you will prolong the life of the system and possibly avoid some problems entirely.

BATHROOM

Bathroom use accounts for 73% of all water used in the home. Small changes can equal big savings.

1. Check toilets for leaks. Drop food coloring or a leak-detection tablet in the toilet bowl tank. If color appears on the bowl, there is a leak that requires immediate attention.
2. Flush only when necessary. Every time you flush you use about six gallons of water. Don't use the toilet as a wastebasket. This not only wastes water, but may damage your on-site sewage system, which cannot handle items that are not biodegradable.
3. Reduce the water level per flush by installing a water displacement device in the toilet tank. A plastic bottle, weighted with water or sand works well. Never use a brick.
4. Take shorter showers. Turn off the water flow when lathering up, and turn it back on to rinse.
5. Install water-saving shower heads or flow restrictors, which are available at local hardware stores and other retail outlets.
6. Take baths. Only the shortest shower saves more water than a partially filled tub.
7. Turn off the water after wetting your toothbrush. Use a glass of water to rinse. Avoid letting the faucet run.
8. Rinse your razor in a sink of water. Letting the water run uses about three gallons a minute.
9. Check faucets and pipes for leaks. A small drip from a worn washer can waste 20 or more gallons a day. Larger leaks waste even more. This can significantly add to the loading of an on-site sewage system.

KITCHEN AND LAUNDRY

10. Use the dishwasher only when full. Wash smaller amounts of dishes in the sink. Using the sink uses less water.
11. Use both sides of the sink when washing dishes by hand; one to wash, one to rinse. Avoid washing dishes under running water.
12. Buy and install a faucet aerator.
13. Keep a bottle of drinking water in the refrigerator. Now there is no need to run the tap to get a glass of cool water.
14. Pre-rinse clothes only when absolutely necessary.

15. Use the proper water level or load size selection on the washing machine.
16. If you have an on-site sewage system that uses soil absorption for disposal, consider running a washer load of clothes every few days rather than many loads on one day of the week, which may overload the soil absorption system.
17. Don't use or install in-sink garbage disposals. These devices use about 11.5 gallons of water each day and tremendously increase organic loading of your sewage tank with solids and fats. Encourage resource-saving composting of organic waste instead. Dispose of meat scraps in the garbage can.
18. Clean vegetables in a pan of water, not under a running faucet. The water collected can be used for your household plants.

OTHER

19. Prevent water run-off from your sprinkler system. Watering the sidewalk, gutter or street wastes water. Surface water run-off should be diverted as much as possible from your on-site sewage system absorption area. Terraces, diversion ditches or curtain drains are some of the methods that may be used to divert surface and subsurface water away from the absorption area.
20. Use a broom, not a hose, when cleaning driveways and walkways.
21. Use a hose with a shut-off nozzle to wash the car.
22. Locate the master water supply valve and label it. The master supply valve can be easily turned off in case of a major leak or broken pipe.
23. Clean gutters and downspouts manually instead of hosing them down.

Distributed by:

**Platte County Health Department
212 Marshall
Platte City, MO 64079
(816) 858-2412**



**Platte County Health Center provides all services on a non-discriminatory basis,
without regard to race, sex, color, national origin, handicap, age or religion.**