

# Septic Systems For Healthy Lakes

Property owners on private septic can protect the lake from bacteria, nitrates, and phosphorus by performing regular maintenance and following these septic-friendly habits.



## Don't wait!

Get your entire system inspected and on a maintenance schedule as soon as possible...before you see (or smell) signs of failure.



## You know you need to pump your septic.

But did you know that your entire system needs to be regularly inspected by a licensed professional, too?

A fully functioning septic system is vital to keeping untreated effluent out of our groundwater and lakes. It also prevents high levels of nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus from getting into the lake and causing toxic cyanobacteria blooms.

## It's more than just a tank...

A proper inspection will assess the condition of the whole system so you can plan for upcoming repairs. They look for cracks in the pipes, tank, sludge levels, clogging from roots, and more!

A licensed professional should pump your septic tank(s) regularly based on the type of system and usage. But, at a minimum be sure to inspect your entire system and leach field once every three years.

## Pick a professional who values the lake.

Not all septic inspections are created equally. Choose a professional that is trained to protect water quality who cares as much as you do. Find a LakeSmart Service Provider Partner at [nhlakes.org/find-a-lakesmart-service-provider-partner](http://nhlakes.org/find-a-lakesmart-service-provider-partner) and schedule maintenance today!

NH LAKES is the only statewide, publicly-supported nonprofit organization working to ensure our lakes remain clean and healthy, now and in the future. For more information, visit [nhlakes.org](http://nhlakes.org), email [info@nhlakes.org](mailto:info@nhlakes.org), or call 603.226.0299.



# Septic System Maintenance

## The Dos and Don'ts of Maintaining Your System

### Do

- Schedule inspections at least every three years and pump regularly.
- Plant only non-woody shallow-rooted plants on your leach field.
- Practice water conservation:
  - Space out laundry and dish loads.
  - Use low-flow plumbing fixtures.
  - Turn off the water when brushing your teeth, shaving, etc.
  - Rent a port-o-potty when you have a lot of guests over.
- Compost food scraps instead of using a garbage disposal to prevent excess sludge.
- Hire a LakeSmart Service Provider Partner for your septic professional.
- Take the self-assessment at [lakesmart.nhlakes.org](https://lakesmart.nhlakes.org) to learn more lake-friendly tips!

### Don't

- Don't wait until something goes wrong to call a professional!
- Don't flush anything other than toilet paper.
- Don't plant woody vegetation on or within 10 feet of your leach field.
- Don't plant edible landscapes over your leach field that could become contaminated.
- Don't add excess weight on top of your system from vehicles, pavement, or structures.
- Don't put chemicals, fats, oils, paint, bleach, deodorizers, septic additives or other improper waste down the drain.
- Overload your system. Too much water can cause clogs!

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