

AROUND THE HOUSE

DID YOU KNOW? Sewer Systems

The most common sewer system is a septic tank and leaching bed which is an absorption field of perforated pipes in trenches filled with stone below the ground surface to percolate into the soil.

Within the tank the solids are broken down to gases and liquids. The breakdown is the result of bacteria action. The gases escape through the plumbing vents.

The leaching beds are sized according to the ability of the soil to absorb the liquid and the size and use of the system.

The solids in the septic tank should be pumped out every 3-5 years or sooner depending upon its use. Check with your area health department – they will inform you as to how often you should pump your septic tank. If you have a closed holding tank it will have to be pumped on a regular basis.

The life expectancy of the leaching beds is roughly twenty-five to thirty years depending on many factors and almost impossible to predict.

DO NOT put bleaches, strong detergents, paint, paint thinners, pesticides, left over medicine or anything toxic into the system. These can kill the bacteria in the tank and reduce the life expectancy of the leaching fields.

Septic systems require regular maintenance which most people do not include in their house budget. Keep in mind that the cost to replace a septic system could be as much as a new family car.

Sewer line venting, whether city sewer or septic systems, is the least understood of waste plumbing systems. Venting performs three (3) functions – it allows air in front of water rushing through the waste pipe to be pushed out of the way – it allows air to be re-introduced into the waste pipe system – it allows sewer gases to escape outside through a vent stack.

Each plumbing fixture in a house should have a trap to prevent sewer gases from entering the home. If you have a sewer odor it usually indicates a trap or venting problem. Over a period of time sewer gases can affect your health. Call a plumber as soon as possible.

A waste pump system is used in areas where a sewer line drain cannot drain by gravity. An electric pump carries water to the appropriate waste pipe. It can be discharged into a city sewer or septic system.

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