

## **Tips for a Healthy Septic System**

- ✓ **Clear Water:** Footing drains, ground water, rainwater, surface water, ice machine drainage, pools, hot tubs, and water treatment devices. All sources of clear water should not be directed to the septic system.
- ✓ **Water Softeners:** The recharge water may cause an increase in the amount of solid material that remains suspended in the liquid layer in the septic tank and ends up in the drainfield. These solids may shorten the life of the septic system. Also the high salt content in the discharge water may affect the septic tank structure.
- ✓ **Iron Filters:** These are very similar to water softeners in that their discharge water is not sewage and does not need to go to the septic system. The back flush of an iron filter removes the iron as a solid which can cause the soil surface to plug in your drainfield. This can lead to premature failure of your septic system.
- ✓ **Reverse Osmosis:** These water filtration systems produce a lot of discharge water. For every 5 gallons they make to drink they also discharge 10-20 gallons down the drain. This water does not need to go to the septic system.
- ✓ **High-efficiency Furnaces:** These operate at a high efficiency and therefore save on energy use. Condensation occurs in the unit as a result of the heating process. The water slowly trickles out of the unit into the plumbing. This water can cause freezing problems in the winter time. This water is clean and does not need to go to the septic system.
- ✓ **Garage Floor Drains:** These should not be hooked up to the septic system or discharge directly to a street, ditch, water body, or deadhead into the soil.
- ✓ **Septic Tank Additives:** DO NOT use these products. They do not help your septic system. They cause the solids in your septic tank to become suspended in the liquid layer which then make their way out to the drainfield and cause the drainfield to plug up and fail.
- ✓ **Things to avoid:** Harsh cleaners, disinfectants, bleach, anti-bacterial soaps, solvents, paints, unwanted medications, grease, lint, food particles, cigarette butts, paper towels, disposable diapers, and wipes (baby, personal, etc.).
- ✓ **Use Liquid laundry detergents:** Powder laundry detergents can use clay as fillers which can go through your septic tank and make their way out to the drainfield and cause the drainfield to plug up and fail.
- ✓ **Use Gel dishwashing detergents:** Powder dishwashing detergents can use clay as fillers which can go through your septic tank and make their way out to the drainfield and cause the drainfield to plug up and fail. Make sure to read the label and buy the ones that don't have a lot of phosphorus in them.
- ✓ **Washing full loads of laundry:** Don't do all your laundry in one day. Spread your laundry out over the week.
- ✓ **Wash full loads of dishes:** This uses less water and is better for your septic system and the environment.
- ✓ **Install low water using fixtures and appliances:** Especially toilets and shower heads.
- ✓ **Spread water use out:** Whenever possible spread your water use out evenly throughout the day and week. Other helpful tip is reducing the length of showers and number of toilet flushing.