



Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources  
Division of Environmental Resources Management

# GUIDE TO SEPTIC SYSTEMS

> Care for your septic drain field:

- Don't drive or park vehicles on any part of your septic system. Doing so can compact the soil in your drain field or damage the pipes, tank, or other septic system components.
- Keep roof drains, basement sump pump drains, and other rainwater or surface water drainage systems away from the drain field. Flooding the drain field with excessive water slows down or stops treatment processes and can cause plumbing fixtures to back up.
- Plant only grass over and near your septic system. Roots from nearby trees or shrubs might clog and damage the drain field.

**Improperly maintained septic systems may pollute ground water and surface waters.**

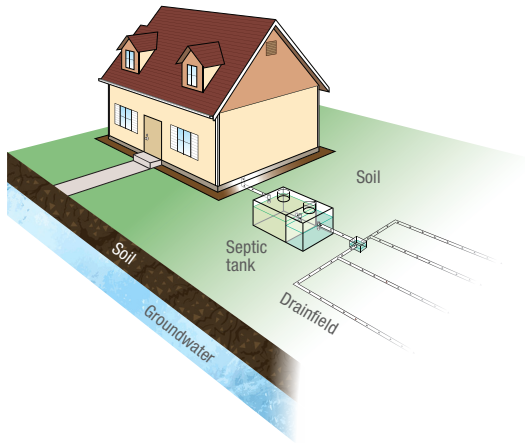
For more information, contact the State of Florida Health Department at 786-315-2444 or visit [www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/onsite-sewage](http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/onsite-sewage) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency at [www.epa.gov/septic](http://www.epa.gov/septic)

[www.miamidade.gov/environment](http://www.miamidade.gov/environment)



## YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!

Did you know that as a property owner or renter you're responsible for maintaining your septic system? Maintaining your septic system protects your investment in your property.



If properly designed, constructed and maintained, it can provide long-term, effective treatment of household wastewater. If your septic system isn't maintained, you might need to replace it, costing you thousands of dollars. A malfunctioning system can contaminate groundwater that might be a source of drinking water. If you sell your property, your septic system must be in good working order.

## PROTECT AND MAINTAIN YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

- > Inspect your system (every 3 years) and pump your tank as necessary (generally every 3 to 5 years).
- > Use water efficiently:
  - Turn off faucets while shaving or brushing your teeth.
  - Run the dishwasher and clothes washer only when they are full.
  - Make sure all faucets are completely turned off when not in use.

- Maintain your plumbing to eliminate leaks.
- Install aerators in the faucets in your kitchen and bathroom.
- Replace old dishwashers, toilets, and clothes washers with new, high-efficiency models.

For more information on water conservation, please visit [www.miamidade.gov/waterconservation](http://www.miamidade.gov/waterconservation)



- > Flush responsibly: dental floss, feminine hygiene products, condoms, diapers, cotton swabs, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, cat litter, paper towels, and other bathroom and kitchen items can clog and potentially damage septic system components.
- > Do not flush household chemicals: gasoline, oil, pesticides, antifreeze, and paint can stress or destroy the biological treatment taking place in the system or might contaminate surface waters and groundwater.
- > Don't dispose of household hazardous wastes in sinks or toilets.

