

Your septic system and source water protection

Drinking water sources or source water includes untreated water from ground water, streams or lakes. This water is used to supply both private wells and municipal drinking water systems.

To ensure that drinking water is as clean and as safe as possible, it is important to prevent contamination at the source. Pollutants in source water put stress on the natural environment and require expensive treatment to remove. It is less expensive to prevent pollutants from entering our drinking water than treating them, also some pollutants cannot be removed from the water. Without source water protection, a new source may have to be found, adding to the cost of the water system in our communities. It is also important to make sure there is

WARNING SIGNS OF A PROBLEM WITH YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

- Slow or backed up drains in your house
- Spongy and/or lush spots on or near the leaching bed
- A sewage smell in the basement or outside
- Poor quality of water in nearby wells or surface water



enough water for private and municipal drinking water systems.

One potential source of contamination can come from septic systems, so it is important to ensure your septic system is functioning properly and that you are having regular inspections and maintenance conducted.

Properly installed and maintained septic systems can reliably treat household wastewater for years. However, if the septic system is not properly cared for, it could contaminate drinking water and the environment, put your family and neighbours' health at risk and result in an expensive repair or replacement bill!

Why is my septic being inspected?

A septic system is like any other equipment in your house, and requires regular maintenance. Regular inspections are vital to proper maintenance of your septic system. A professional inspector will identify any current or potential problems, and help ensure your system has a long and useful life. A properly maintained and functioning septic system can last 15 to 25 years and can provide a safe, reliable way of treating your household wastewater. Regular inspections can find existing or potential problems before they become severe and more costly to fix.

FACT SHEET 2

SEPTIC



Certain properties that are located within the most vulnerable municipal Wellhead Protection Areas or Intake Protection Zones (score of 10 and certain issues contributing areas) are required to have their septic systems inspected every five years.

This is mandatory under the Ontario Building Code, the Clean Water Act and your local Source Protection Plan. The purpose of the inspection is to ensure your septic system is functioning properly and includes a visual inspection by a qualified inspector. Properties containing septic systems within these areas will be contacted by the municipalities with further information and to arrange an inspection.

- To find out if your property falls within a vulnerable area like a wellhead protection area, visit wellingtonwater.ca, or get in touch with your source protection Risk Management Official or local municipality.

- For more information about having your septic system inspected, contact your local municipal building department or your source protection Risk Management Official.

Caring for your septic system

It is important to care for your septic system – you are the owner of this system and it is your responsibility to ensure it is functioning properly. The following tips can help to protect both your investment and the environment:

- Know where your tank and leaching bed are located and ensure your tank is pumped out every 3 to 5 years.
- Avoid putting grease, food, compost, wet naps, feminine hygiene products, etc. down the drain or toilet.
- Avoid parking vehicles on or driving over your tanks and leaching bed.
- Do not construct driveways, buildings, or pools on or near any part of the septic system.
- Be water smart by conserving and spreading out your water use.

- Avoid excessive use of anti-bacterial soaps, bleaches, and harsh cleansers.
- Do not put paints, solvents, or other toxic chemicals down the drain.
- Keep trees and shrubs away from the leaching bed.

For more information, contact:

Wellington Source Water Protection,
7444 Wellington Road 21, Elora, ON
Tel: 1-844-383-9800

Email: sourcewater@centrewellington.ca

Website: www.wellingtonwater.ca

Or your local municipal office

Additional resources

Check out **Septic Smart!** From the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food (OMAFRA) available at: www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/environment/facts/sep_smart.htm

Septic Smart includes videos and information on-line as well as a DVD, a book, and a checklist that you can order directly from **Service Ontario Publications** (1-800-668-9938)

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PROTECTION
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