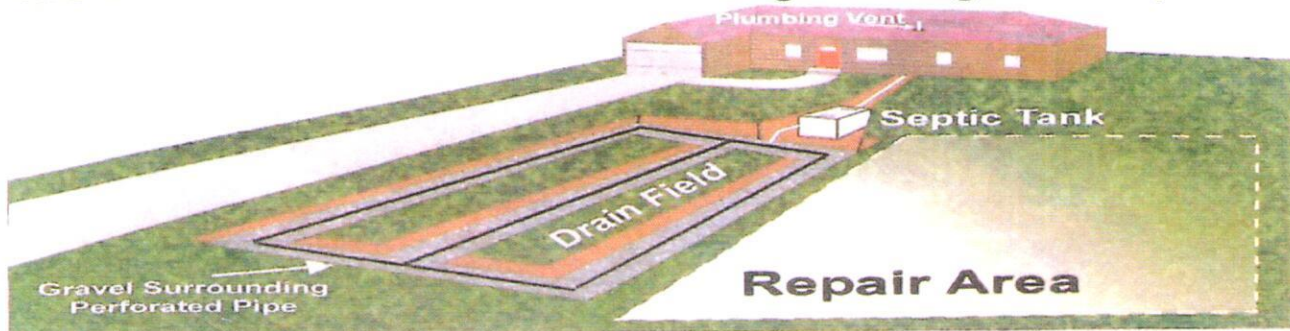


## The Do's and Don'ts for Onsite Sewage Management Systems



**Conventional Septic Tank & Absorption System**

\*Note the large area needed for your primary drainfield, as well as the replacement area in the event of a failure. Please protect these areas as recommended in the following "Do" and "Don't" lists.

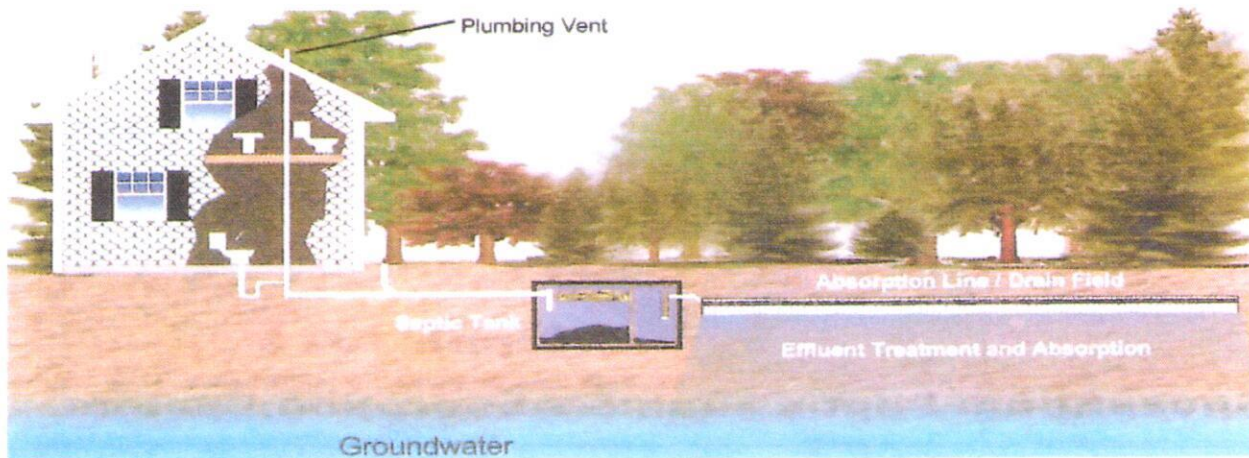
To view an educational video, please visit our website at: [www.georgiaeh.us](http://www.georgiaeh.us).

### Do:

1. Call your local Health Department with any questions concerning the function and maintenance of your septic system.
2. Have your septic tank pumped every 3 to 5 years as recommended by the Georgia Department of Public Health's Environmental Health Section.
3. Conserve Water by staggering wash loads, installing low flow fixtures, and repairing leaky fixtures and faucets.
4. Divert water away from the septic system by using gutters and downspouts whenever possible.
5. Insure that anyone working on your septic system is state certified.
6. Keep records of system installation and maintenance activities performed on your septic system.
7. Protect your drainfield and repair area by not parking, driving or building permanent structures over these areas.

### Don't:

1. Park or drive over your septic tank, drainfield or repair area.
2. Plant anything over the absorption field but grass.
3. Use septic tank additives.
4. Jet your drainfield.
5. Use a garbage disposal unless your system was designed for it.
6. Build any structures over the septic system or drainfield repair area (sheds, garages, driveways, etc.)
7. Use your septic system to dispose of inappropriate wastes:
  - A. Inert Materials - plastics, rubber, scouring pads, cigarette filters, bandages, etc.
  - B. Food Wastes - fats, oils and grease, coffee grounds, melon rinds, egg shells, etc.
  - C. Paper Products - baby wipes, scented toilet tissue, feminine hygiene products, condoms, cotton balls, etc.
  - D. Chemicals - paint or paint thinner, solvents, automotive fluids, fuels, pesticides, etc.



### **Components:**

A typical septic system has four main components: plumbing from the home, a septic tank, a drainfield, and the soil.

#### ***Plumbing from the home***

All of your household wastewater exits your home through a pipe to the septic tank. The sewage gas from the system is vented through a plumbing vent. In addition, a "clean out" within the pipe is usually located between the house and septic tank.

#### ***Septic tank***

The septic tank is a buried, watertight container typically made of concrete, fiberglass, or plastic. It holds the wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle out (forming sludge) and oil and grease to float to the surface (as scum). It also allows partial decomposition of the solid materials. Double compartments and a T-shaped outlet in the septic tank prevent the sludge and scum from leaving the tank and traveling into the drainfield area. A filter are also required to keep solids from entering the drainfield. Risers with lids at the ground surface or within 12 inches below the ground surface allow easy location, inspection, and pumping of the tank. Septic tank additives are not recommended and may cause harm. Tanks should be pumped every 3 to 5 years.

#### ***Drainfield***

The wastewater exits the septic tank and is discharged into the drainfield for further treatment by bacteria in the soil. The partially treated wastewater is pushed farther along into the drainfield for treatment every time new wastewater enters the tank. A typical drainfield consists of a series of pipes with holes and covered with gravel and soil. However, a drainfield could be an alternative disposal system consisting of chambers; polystyrene bundles; polyethylene pipe bundles; biopeat or sand. The type of drainfield components may vary based on the conditions of the lot. Please be advised that neither septic tank additives nor jetting are recommended for your drainfield.

#### ***Soil***

Septic tank wastewater that flows from the drainfield percolates into the soil. The soil provides final treatment by removing harmful bacteria, viruses, and nutrients. Suitable soil is necessary for successful wastewater treatment. Soil can become clogged over time and a new drainfield will be necessary.