



THE ASPA SEPTIC SYSTEM OWNER'S MANUAL

A Guide to the Proper Care and Maintenance of Your Septic System

What is a Septic System?

A septic system treats wastewater from your home, making it cleaner before it goes back to the environment. The wastewater is made of blackwater (toilet wastes) and greywater (kitchen sink, bathtub and laundry wastes).

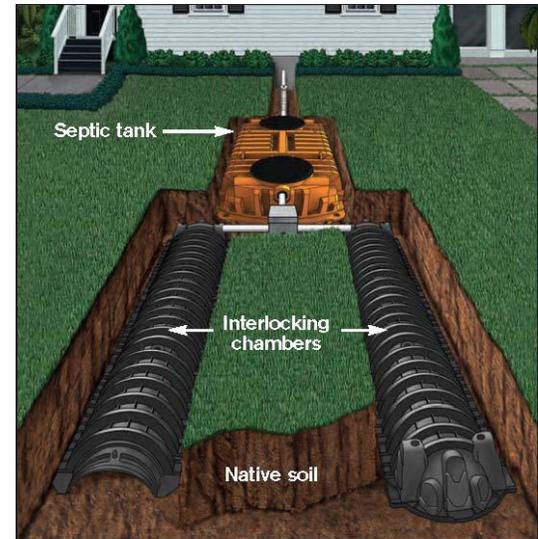
A septic system has two parts: a water tight septic tank and a drainfield. **Primary treatment of wastewater occurs in the septic tank, where bacteria help clean the wastewater.** The wastewater then flows into the drainfield for more treatment. Here, bacteria in the soil help clean even more of the wastewater as it slowly moves through the soil. If your septic system does not have a water tight tank AND a drainfield, then your wastewater is NOT being treated properly and your health and the health of the environment may be at risk.



CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

A septic system may be out of sight, but it definitely should not be out of mind. With proper maintenance and by being more aware of your daily living habits, you will greatly improve the life and health of your septic system. You can protect the performance and life of your system by controlling what goes into and through your septic system. Here's how:

- **Pump the Tank Periodically.** Have your tank pumped by ASPA about every two to three years - more often if you have a large family. Bacteria in your septic tank consume about 95 percent of the solids that enter it. The other 5 percent remains in the tank and slowly builds up inside the tank. So, your septic tank must be pumped out regularly. CAUTION: If your septic tank is not pumped, solids will overflow into the drainfield and can destroy your system!
- **Conserve water.** Using too much water over a short period of time will fill your drainfield and may cause toilet backups. Fix leaky toilets, pipes, sinks, faucets, etc. **Conserve American Samoa's precious water and make your septic system last longer!**
- **No paints, oils, chemical drain cleaners, thinners, solvents, poisons, or pesticides into your septic tank.** Chemicals can kill bacteria that treat the waste. Remember that a septic system uses natural processes, so only natural waste should go into it.
- **No grease or cooking oils.** Do not melt grease and pour it down the drain. Grease will harden in the septic tank and can block your septic system.
- **Keep surface water away from septic system.** Direct rain water (roof drainage, driveway runoff) away from the tank and drainfield so they can take more wastewater.
- **Help the right plants grow.** Grow grass, small flowers or ground cover over the septic system to absorb water and prevent soil erosion. Remove large trees with roots that penetrate and damage the leachfield.
- **Avoid physical damage.** Don't drive or park a car over the system or use heavy equipment in the area. Don't dig in the leachfield or build anything over it. Don't cover the tank or leachfield with concrete or blacktop-this may damage the system and your home!
- **Avoid excessive use.** For homes in areas that sometime flood or where the groundwater is high, be extra careful about wastewater usage during heavy rainfall. When the ground has large puddles around your home, then the drainfield is probably full. Try to wait until water drains away before flushing wastewater to the septic system.



Effluent flows into the leachfield where it is naturally purified as it percolates down through the soil.

Most problems with septic systems are due to lack of proper care. ASPA wants to help you and our environment with this information on how to care for your septic system. Please protect your family, your home, and the environment by following these simple guidelines on how to properly operate and maintain your septic system. Call ASPA at 699-1462 if you have any questions.