

## Household Wastewater

An ounce of prevention can save you money. Regular maintenance to your septic system is cheaper than replacing a failing system.



***What you put into your household wastewater through toilets, sinks, tubs and floor drains may eventually get into the LAC drinking water supply.***

The average life of a septic system is 15 to 25 years. The ability of your septic system to handle waste is dependent on how you use and maintain it. Here are some tips for better septic system performance:

- 1. Use less water.** Less water in the septic tank allows better settling of solids. The result is that fewer solids make it to the disposal field, so the system is less likely to clog.
- 2. Don't put chemicals into your septic system.** Household chemicals kill the good bacteria that help your septic system work. Chemicals also travel through the disposal field and could contaminate our drinking water.
- 3. Don't use the toilet for other waste.** Non-biodegradable materials such as diapers, tampons, and cigarette butts, and large amounts of fats and grease will clog your septic system. Limit use of your garbage disposal, as the finely ground solids can also clog the disposal field. Please note that if you are adding a garbage disposal to an existing septic system, that system may be undersized for that use.
- 4. Have your septic tank pumped every 2-3 years.** Timely pumping can extend the life of your system. Pumping a tank costs \$225 - \$250. This is much cheaper than \$3,000 - \$10,000 for a new leachfield.
- 5. Keep surface water away.** Divert roof drains, house footing drains and runoff from driveways and hillsides away from the septic system area.
- 6. Check for signs that your septic system is not working.** Wet areas or lush green growth in your lawn, sewage odors, slow draining pipes, backup of wastewater into your home or an outbreak of wastewater onto the ground surface all are signs that your system is malfunctioning. Please tell LAC and your local code enforcement department if you have any of these problems, and fix them promptly. In certain cases, assistance may be obtained to help with leach field replacement costs. Check with your local officials.
- 7. Keep records of your system.** Include a pumping schedule, name of installer, age of system and a sketch of the location on your lot. This will help you maintain the system and boost the confidence of future buyers that the system is well cared for.

