

Septic Systems

Septic systems are an effective method for treating household wastewater. A typical septic system has four main components:

- Wastewater line from the home
- Septic Tank
- Drainfield
- Soil (microbes in the soil digest or remove most contaminants before the wastewater percolates into the groundwater).

If maintained properly, septic systems provide long-term treatment of wastewater. However, if your septic system is not maintained, it may need to be repaired or replaced. Repair or replacement of such systems is costly and malfunctioning septic systems can contaminate groundwater and surface water (sources of drinking water and recreational water in many areas in Putnam County).

Typical Septic System Design

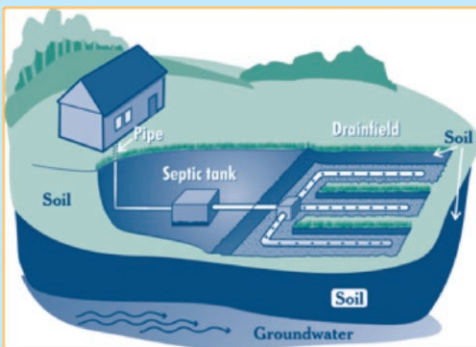


Image Courtesy of USEPA

Contact the Putnam County Department of Health or your town for more information.

**Putnam County
Department of Health**
(845) 808-1390

**Putnam County Soil &
Water Conservation District**
(845) 878-7918

Town of Carmel
(845) 628-1500

Town of Kent
(845) 225-2067

Town of Patterson
(845) 878-6500

Town of Putnam Valley
(845) 526-2121

Town of Southeast
(845) 279-4313

Visit the Putnam County
Department of Health's website:

[http://www.putnamcountyny.com/
health/](http://www.putnamcountyny.com/health/)

Produced by the Putnam County MS4
Stormwater Coordinating Committee

Septic System Inspection Law

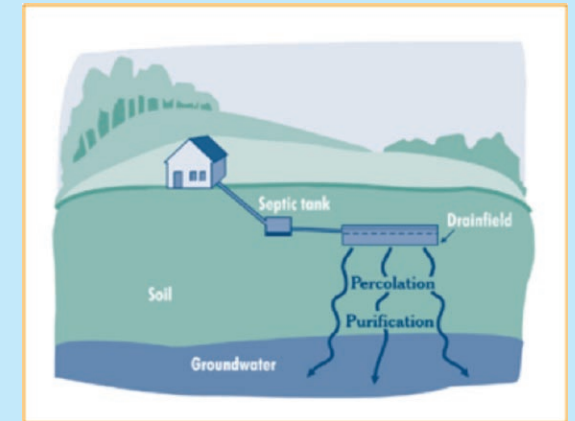


Image Courtesy of USEPA

Do you have a septic system?
A new state law applies to you.

Effective May 1, 2011, the new state law requires homeowners and businesses to pump their septic systems at a minimum of once every five (5) years. See inside for more information.

Did you know?

You must have your septic system pumped out once every five years.

Putnam County communities within the NYC watershed recently adopted new laws that require homeowners and businesses to pump their septic systems at a minimum of once every five years. Putnam County Department of Health (PCDOH) will be training septic waste haulers in the proper reporting of septic system pump outs. Homeowners would need to hire a licensed waste hauler and have that hauler submit the appropriate forms to the town and PCDOH to document compliance with the new law. You should retain a copy of the inspection forms provided to you by the waste hauler.

What does this new law mean for you?

Hopefully not much. Homeowners should be having their septic systems pumped on a regular basis depending on the amount of use. See the additional information in this brochure on best practices for maintaining your septic system. If you just had your septic system pumped before the law took effect or if you had your septic system pumped just after the law took effect but were not able to obtain a copy of the inspection form, you have another five years to pump again. Ordinary septic systems should probably be pumped every three to five years.

Typical Septic Tank Design

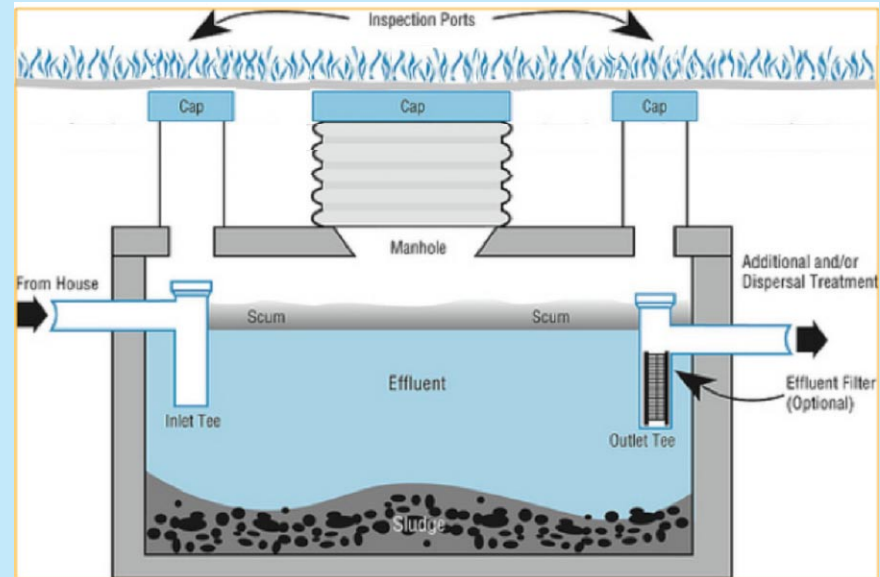


Image Courtesy of USEPA

Maintaining Your Septic System

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) provides comprehensive guidance regarding the care of septic systems. The USEPA recommends that homeowners:

Regularly Inspect and Pump the Septic System

- *Have the tank inspected and pumped regularly by a professional.*

Use Water Efficiently

- *Install high-efficiency toilets, showerheads, and faucet aerators to minimize water usage; repair leaky fixtures.*

Don't Dispose of Household Hazardous Wastes in Sinks or Toilets

- *Flushing household chemicals, paint, and automobile fluids can stress or destroy the biological treatment within the septic tank.*

Care for the Drainfield

- *Do not drive or park vehicles on the septic system.*
- *Only plant grass on the septic system.*

For more information regarding the USEPA's septic system guidance, visit:
http://www.epa.gov/owm/septic/pubs/homeowner_guide_long.pdf.