



## **USER MANUAL**

### **DO'S AND DO NOT'S FOR EFFLUENT COLLECTION SYSTEM**

Thank you for choosing South Blount Utility District for your wastewater service. If you have any questions, please contact us at 982-3560 or visit us at [SouthBlountUtility.Org](http://SouthBlountUtility.Org). The following tips and recommendations list good healthy practices that will help to insure a long life for your septic tank system and minimal maintenance.

It's important to understand that the first step to a successful sewage treatment and disposal system begins with homeowner education. A knowledgeable homeowner can prevent premature failures and eliminate costly repairs. Your effluent collection system is composed of a septic tank with a pump and plastic pressure mains. All waste from your house flows into the septic tank where it is digested. The solids settle to the bottom of the tank. The scum floats to the top. The middle portion of the tank remains fairly clear. The clear liquid is pumped out of the tank into the pressure sewer main

Items that cause problems and failure of this system are:

1. Excessive sludge or scum accumulation in septic tank
2. Excessive water usage
3. Some fabric softeners and whiteners
4. Excessive grease and oil from food processing
5. Hair from hair cutting
6. Diapers, rags, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, plastic and rubber products (condoms), and chemical cleaners
7. Any non-biologically degradable substances will cause problems in the treatment and disposal for your sewage disposal system.

A properly maintained septic tank provides a high degree of treatment and yields an effluent that is relatively free of greases and solids that can clog the effluent filter and pump. The best practice is not to discharge anything into a septic system that is poisonous or that may inhibit the abilities of the friendly critters (bacteria) living and working there. An excellent guideline that should be practiced in every household is not to dispose anything into the septic tank that hasn't first been ingested, with the exception of toilet paper and mild detergents.

## **DO'S**

DO CALL SOUTH BLOUNT UTILITY DISTRICT at 865-982-3560 whenever the alarm comes on (it sounds like a smoke alarm). The audible alarm can be silenced by pushing the illuminated light located directly above the "PUSH TO SILENCE" label on the front of the control panel. With normal use the tank has a reserve storage capacity good for 24 – 48 hours.

DO FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF with the location of the electrical control panel and note the number on the panel.

DO COORDINATE the location of new landscaping or permanent structures with S.B.U.D. prior to installation in order to ensure that the integrity of the septic tank and service lines are not jeopardized.

DO BE AWARE that district maintenance personnel will service and maintain all equipment except the inlet plumbing. Maintenance will be done during normal working hours, except emergencies.

DO BE AWARE homeowner is responsible for excessive tank pumping.

DO PRACTICE water conservation. By reducing the amount of water going into your system you can extend the life of the system and reduce the power consumption. Wash clothes and dishes only when you have a full load. When possible avoid several loads in one day.

DO BE AWARE that a simple toilet float can hang up and result in over 2,000 gallons per day of wasted water. Normal household usage ranges from 300 to 500 gallons per day.

DO COLLECT GREASE & HAIR in a container and dispose with your trash. Avoid using garbage disposals excessively. Compost scraps or disposed with your trash. Food by-products accelerate the need for tank pumping and increase maintenance.

## **DONT'S**

DON'T DRIVE over your sewer system as damage may result. If your tank is in an area subject to possible traffic, consider putting up an attractive barricade or row of shrubs to discourage traffic unless the tank has been equipped with a special traffic lid. Depending on the circumstances, the property owner of record may be held financially responsible for damage of this nature.

DON'T ENTER your tank. Any work to the tank should be done from the outside. Gases that can be generated in the tank and or the lack of oxygen can be fatal. Call your SBCUD for assistance.

DON'T DISPOSE water softener backwash in the tank. The backwash brine contains high levels of chlorides that can destroy the microorganisms and inhibit the biological digestion that occurs in the septic tank. The brine solution also interferes with the solid's sedimentation that occurs in the tank and may increase the flow through the tank from 25 to 50 percent.

DON'T USE excessive quantities of water. Repair leaky toilets, faucets or plumbing fixtures

(leaky toilets can result in excess flows at 1 gallon per minute). Use water saving devices such as low flow shower heads and low volume flush toilets.

DON'T CONNECT rain gutters or storm drains or allow other surface water to get into your septic system. This additional water will overload your septic tank system and cause a premature failure. Your septic system was designed only for domestic water use.

DON'T FLUSH undesirable substances into the sewer. Flushing flammable and toxic products is dangerous, while other materials such as paper towels, rags, newspaper, cigarettes, coffee grounds, eggshells, sanitary napkins, condoms, large amounts of hair and cooking grease are a maintenance nuisance and will require frequent pumping of the tank.

DON'T DUMP recreational vehicle (RV) waste into your septic tank because it will increase the amount of solids entering the septic tank and the frequency of required pumping.

Some RV waste may contain chemicals that are toxic or that may adversely affect the biological activity in your tank.

DON'T USE garbage disposal systems to dispose of non-biodegradable materials because they increase the amount of solids entering the septic tank and the frequency of required septage pumping. Collect grease & hair in a container rather than disposing down the drain. Do not pour grease down the drain. Pouring grease down the drain is your fastest way to ensure a failing system – and expensive repair.

DON'T dig without knowing the location of your wastewater system. As much as possible, plan landscaping and permanent outdoor structures before installation. But easily removable items, such as bird baths and picnic tables, are OK to place on top of your system.

DON'T turn off the main circuit breaker to the wastewater pumps when going on vacation. If there is any infiltration or inflow into the system, the pumps will need to handle it.

DON'T FLUSH pool or spa products into your system, and limit your use of bath and body oils, as they can overload your system's digestion capacity.

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### **SUBSTITUTES FOR HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE**

Replace the following hazardous products with ones less environmentally harmful. The hazardous cleaners are listed in bold face, followed by the suggested substitute.

**AMMONIA-BASED CLEANERS:** Sprinkle Baking Soda on a damp sponge. For windows, use a solution of 2 Tbs. White Vinegar to 1 qt. water. Place the mixture into a spray bottle.

**DISINFECTANTS:** Use Borax: ½ cup in a gallon of water; deodorizes.

**SCOURING CLEANERS AND POWDERS:** Sprinkle baking soda on a damp sponge or add 4 Tbs. baking soda to 1 qt. warm water or use Bon Ami. It's cheaper and won't scratch.

**CARPET/UPHOLSTERY CLEANERS:** Sprinkle dry cornstarch or baking soda on stain, then vacuum. For tougher stains, blot with white vinegar in soapy water.

**TOILET CLEANERS:** Sprinkle baking soda or Bon Ami and then scrub with a toilet brush.

**FURNITURE/FLOOR POLISHES:** To clean use oil soap and warm water. Dry with soft cloth. Polish with 1-part lemon juice to 2-part oil (any kind) or use natural products with lemon oil or beeswax in mineral oil.