



For more information,
please call the
Riverside County's
"Only Rain Down the Storm Drain"
Water Pollution Prevention Program
at 1-800-506-2555 or
www.rcflood.org

OR

To Report A Sewage Spill:
During normal business hours
(7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.), call
Riverside County Department of
Environmental Health
at 951-358-5172 or 1-888-722-4234
www.rivcoeh.org

After business hours, on weekends
or holidays, call
951-782-2968

For emergencies, dial 911.

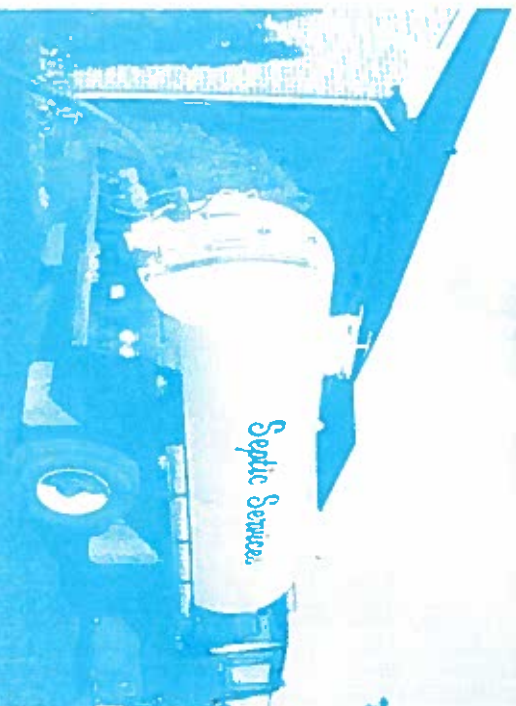
epa.gov/septicismart - A website providing resources
and education on the design and maintenance of septic
tank systems. The Environmental Protection Agency
provides helpful environmental information and resources.



The Riverside County
"Only Rain Down the Storm Drain"
Water Pollution Prevention Program
gratefully acknowledges
Orange County's Storm Water Program
for their contribution to this brochure.

Water Pollution Prevention

Tips for Maintaining a Septic Tank System



Water quality responsibility
begins at **YOUR** front door



Tips for Maintaining a Septic Tank System

Households that are not served by public sewers usually depend on a septic tank system* to treat and dispose of wastewater. A well designed, installed and regularly maintained septic system can provide years of reliable service. However, when these systems fail to operate properly, significant damage can occur to property and the environment. The homeowner is responsible for these damages and may be subject to fines. Therefore, it is important to follow these simple tips when using a septic tank system:

Conserve Water

The more wastewater produced, the more the soil must absorb. By conserving water, the life of the drain field will be extended and the chance of a system failure is decreased.

- Reduce your water use by:
- Using water saving devices
 - Repairing leaky faucets and plumbing fixtures
 - Reducing toilet reservoir volume or flow
 - Taking shorter showers
 - Washing only full loads of dishes and laundry
 - Limit the number of water use activities performed at the same time.

Never Flush Harmful Materials Into The Septic Tank

Grease, cooking oils, newspaper, paper towels, rags, coffee grounds, sanitary napkins and cigarettes should not be flushed or disposed of in the tank. Chemicals such as solvents, soils, unused prescriptions, over-the-counter medications, paints and pesticides are harmful to the system's operation and may pollute the groundwater. For information on the proper disposal of household hazardous waste, call toll free 1-800-304-2226. Also, never use septic tank additives, commercial septic tank cleaners, yeast, sugar, etc. These products are not necessary and some may be harmful to your system.

Keep Runoff Away From The System

Water from surfaces such as roofs, driveways or patios should be diverted away from the septic tank and drain field area.

Protect The System From Damage

Don't park, pave or put livestock or heavy objects, equipment or machinery over the drainfield. The pressure can compact the soil or damage pipes. Also check your septic system map prior to constructing buildings or a pool on the property. The area over the absorption field and tank should be left undisturbed with only grass on top. Trees or shrubs, which may clog and damage the drain, should be removed from the area.

Keep Records

Chart the location of your septic tank and keep up-to-date service and repair records for future reference.

Inspect The System

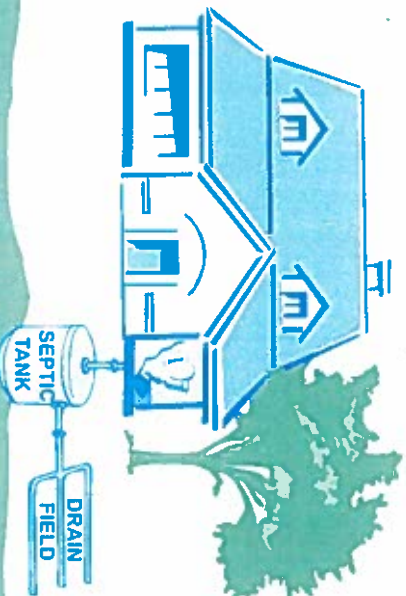
Monitor the system yearly to ensure it is not at an "early warning level." Inspect the drain field and down slope areas for odors, wet spots, or surfacing of sewage. This may be an early indication of a problem with the system. Also, have the system inspected by a licensed septic tank professional every three to five years.

Pump The Tank When Needed

Routine pumping can prevent failures, such as clogging and backup into the home. Never pump full or failing septic systems to the street or storm drain, it is illegal and dangerous.

Never Enter The Septic Tank

Poisonous gases or the lack of air can be fatal. A certified professional should perform any work to the tank.



* Contact your local collection agency or city to determine if your home is served by a septic tank.