

This is a basic drawing of what a two compartment septic tank looks like. One of the things that we hear a lot when people first look into the tank is that "IT'S FULL!" But as you can see it has to reach a certain level before the effluent water can leave the tank via the outlet tee. The proper operating level of a septic tank is about 10" from the top of the tank. There should be a gap from the top of the Scum Layer to the top of the tank.

Sometimes people will call concerned about a smell when they go outside their house. Our first question is "Is it cool outside?" and then "have you recently done laundry or taken a shower?" What happens when you "use" your system and wastewater goes into the tank... this 10" space of "deadair" gets displaced and has to go somewhere. It will travel back up the line and come out the vent on the roof. If it is a cooler morning or day and/or if the water going into the tank is hot, this "deadair" is heavier than the surrounding outside air and it will settle down around the house, causing a temporary odor.

Rest assured, this typically goes away with the next breeze or as the day warms up. If it does not, then you may want to call and have your system looked at.

Here is an example of an Effluent Filter that had not been cleaned in about 3 years... as you can see there is nothing but GOO on it! The holes in the effluent material that normally allow the effluent water to flow through are completely clogged! When this happens the effluent can not get out into the leaching field and the system will back up into the home creating a NASTY MESS! This problem was quickly alleviated by rinsing the filter off with water!

Effluent filters are GREAT devices that are meant to keep the solids in the tank and the water going into the leaching field as clean as possible. From this picture you can see how that works.

HOWEVER, if you have an effluent filter on your tank you need to make sure that it is properly cleaned and maintained. You can certainly do this yourself by opening the outlet lid, pulling the filter our of it's tee and rinsing the buildup off the filter... but if you do not have the stomach for that, be sure to call your service provider and get on a regularly scheduled maintenance plan so that you don't end up with a filter looking like this one!

This is just a picture depicting what the current "Typical Septic Usage is for an Average Home"

Realize that most of the wastewater that goes down the system is "water". One of the things that we caution people about is hydraulic overload. Which simply means too much water!

The more water that is put down the system is that much water that the system has to process. We recommend utilizing water conservation practices. Such as only flushing the toilet when necessary (when it's yellow, let it mellow, when it's brown, flush it down), limit the amount of time anyone spends in the shower, limit the use of the bathtub, only wash full loads and use the appropriate water level setting for that load.

In addition to this, be conscientious about the amount of water through the system at any given time. Basically, allow the septic tank to settle out before pushing another load through. For this we recommend spreading the laundry out over the week and limiting the number of loads to 2 a day, preferably one in the morning and one in the evening.

All of these practices will lengthen the life of your leachfield.