

How You Can Help...

Maintain Septic Tanks

Septic tanks are a special area of concern. If not maintained carefully, they can pollute the Bay and area streams and rivers with bacteria and nutrients. Problems occur when tanks and drainage fields become clogged, losing their ability to filter waste. Shallow drainfields also can overflow to nearby bodies of water.

To prevent water pollution from septic tanks:

- Have your septic tank pumped every three to five years to avoid build-up of sludge. Inspect annually to observe accumulation.
- Do not use septic tank cleaning compounds. They can impair the tank's efficiency and damage the drainfield.
- Practice water conservation to reduce the amount of water flowing through your drainfield.
- Think before you flush. Paper, plastics, diapers and cigarette filters do not decompose. These materials clog the system, increasing maintenance needs. Toxic household chemicals should not be flushed into the septic tank under any circumstances.

Garbage disposals are an additional burden on septic systems. Kitchen scraps should be composted or disposed of in trash cans.

Contact your county health department for further information.