

LOWER EASTERN SHORE SEPTIC SYSTEM FACTS

Quick facts for home buyers and home sellers. A septic system can be your best friend, but if improperly managed it can lead to costly repairs or replacements.

Maintain your home's value - treat your septic system right. If you're planning on selling your home, be proactive and have your septic system inspected before or during listing. A septic issue can prevent or delay your transaction.

WHY?

- Holding tanks can cost several hundred dollars or more a month to pump while septic tanks could cost a few hundred dollars every 3-5 years depending on usage.
- Septic systems are costly to replace, from a few thousand to tens of thousands of dollars.
- Keep detailed records of all maintenance on your septic system. File those with your other homeowner records, these will be invaluable if you should decide on selling your home.
- State regulations may make it more difficult and expensive for you to replace a septic system.
- Because of the difference in cost between septic and holding tanks, and changes to septic regulations, it is best to be careful and proactive with your existing system.

KNOWLEDGE:

- Know the locations of your septic system, drain field, and well. If you do not, your county may have a record of their locations.
- Know what to avoid putting down your sink drains, like oils and grease.
- Know the lifetime of your system.
- If you have a well, test your drinking water often. Maryland Department of the Environment recommends testing wells every three years.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Pump your septic tank every 3-5 years.
- Have your system inspected by a licensed professional every 3-5 years.
- Divert storm water away from your septic system.
- Do not drive over your septic system.
- Do not use an irrigation system over a drain field.
- Flush only toilet paper.
- Fix leaking faucets and toilets to reduce the amount of water going to your system.
- Garbage disposals shouldn't be used on homes with a septic system as bacteria in the septic tank cannot break down foods which have not been passed through a body first.
- Take note of trees near your septic system as roots can obstruct tile lines or the septic tank.

Disclosure: The Coastal Association of REALTORS® provides this information as a service to its members and the public. This notice is for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal advice. All individuals and entities are responsible for conducting their own due diligence and consulting with legal or regulatory professionals regarding the implications of these ordinances.



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SIGNS OF FAILURE:

- Wastewater begins backing up into your home.
- Standing water in your basement, crawlspace, or around your septic system.
- Your drain field is surrounded by spongy, bright green grass.
- Odors in and around your home.

RESOURCES:

-  **Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE)**
<https://mde.maryland.gov/> 410-537-3000.
-  **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): Septic Smart**
<https://www.epa.gov/septic/septicsmart>
-  **Wicomico County Health Department:** 410-546-4446
<https://www.wicomicohealth.org/environmental-health/applications-and-information/>
-  **Worcester County Department of Environmental Programs:** 410-632-1194
<https://www.co.worcester.md.us/departments/env>
-  **Somerset County Health Department:** 443-523-1700
<https://somersethealth.org/environmental-health/wells-septics/>
-  **University of Maryland Extension:** 301-789-5256
<https://extension.umd.edu/programs/environment-natural-resources/program-areas/wells-septic-systems-and-water-quality/septicsunderstandingmaintaining/>

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