

Inspect Septic Tank and System

Overview

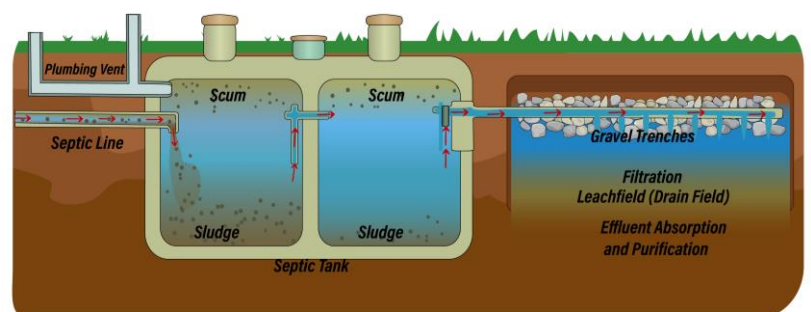
- A septic system is an on-site wastewater treatment and disposal system located within an individual property's boundary. It collects, treats, and disposes of wastewater from the home or business.
- Flooding events can cause backup of sewage in septic systems and can damage the septic system components.
- Flooding can also cause leaching of septic hazardous substances into the floodwaters, the house, and/or nearby waterways.
- In areas that experience velocity flooding, the septic tank and associated plumbing fixtures can shift and be damaged due to the high velocity of the floodwaters, wave action, and/or impact from debris.
- Additionally, buoyancy forces can displace tanks and/or plumbing fixtures during flooding events.
- In order to ensure that the structure's septic tank and system is not damaged, the system should be inspected by a licensed inspector every 3 to 5 years.
- Additionally, consider an inspection if you observe any of the following warning signs of leaking:
 - Inside the house/building:
 - Slowly draining sinks and toilets
 - Plumbing backups
 - Gurgling in the plumbing
 - Outside of the structure in the yard:
 - Damp soil or ponding over the septic system
 - Grass growing faster and greener
 - Sewage odor near the system



Key Takeaways

During flood events, floodwaters can cause sewage backups, damage to septic system components, or even leaching of septic system hazardous substances.

To make sure the on-site septic system has no flood damage, the septic system should be inspected every 3 to 5 years and when you observe any warning signs of leaking.





I-ADAPT

Exterior Adaptation Inspect Septic Tank and System

Estimated Costs/Benefits

*U.S. dollars (2022), estimates are subject to change

Potential Costs		Potential Benefits	
Item	Estimate	Post-Flood Recovery Actions	Estimate
Septic system inspection	\$300-\$3,000	Cleaning out sewage contaminated flooding in the structure	\$7-\$7.50 per square foot
		Replacing the septic system due to compounded damage	\$1,400-\$12,000
ESTIMATED TOTAL COST	\$300-\$3,000	ESTIMATED TOTAL SAVINGS (1,000 sq ft. structure)	\$8,400-\$19,500+

Additional Actions

- In addition to inspecting the septic system, consider installing backflow valves in water and sewer piping to prevent water from entering the structure through the pipes during flooding events.
- If your septic system has leaked, notify your neighbors.

Expected Maintenance

- Look for signs of damage in the yard at least once per month.
- Pump the septic tank at least once every 3 years using a licensed Class F liquid waste hauler.

Permitting Agencies

- No permit required for hiring licensed septic system inspectors.

Who to Contact

- Licensed class H system inspector
- Groundwater Discharges Section at 302-739-9947 (in Dover) or 302-856-4561 (in Georgetown)

Additional Resources

- [Delaware Class H \(System Inspector\) Licensees](#)
- [DNREC: Septic Systems](#)
- [DNREC: Septic Rehabilitation Loan Program](#)
- [DNREC: Water Supply](#)

Resources can also be found at <https://de.gov/iadapt>

Technical definitions and more information are located on the I-ADAPT website: <https://de.gov/iadapt>.



This information is intended to be used for planning purposes. It is not intended to substitute or take precedence over the guidance of design engineers, contractors, utility companies or regulatory agencies.

For more information, contact DNREC's Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy at DNREC_IADAPT@Delaware.gov

