

Do your part and be SepticSmart!

Governor Whitmer declares September 18-22 as SepticSmart Week

Governor Gretchen Whitmer has proclaimed September 18-22, 2023, as SepticSmart Week. On Monday, Sept. 18, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – in conjunction with federal, state, and local governments, and private sector partners – will kick off its eleventh annual SepticSmart Week to encourage homeowners and communities to properly care for and maintain their septic systems.

More than 1.3 million homes and businesses in Michigan depend on septic systems to treat wastewater. If not maintained, failing septic systems can contaminate groundwater and harm the environment by releasing bacteria, viruses, and household chemicals and other pollutants to local waterways. Proper septic system maintenance protects public health, the environment, and saves the homeowner money through avoided costly repairs.

Simple tips for homeowners:

- **Protect It and Inspect It:** Homeowners should generally have their system inspected every three years by a qualified professional or according to their state or local health department's recommendations. Regular septic system maintenance can save homeowners thousands of dollars in repairs and protect public health.
- **Think at the Sink:** What goes down the drain has a big impact on your septic system. Fats, grease, and solids can clog a system's pipes and drainfield.
- **Don't Overload the Commode:** A toilet is not a trash can. Disposable diapers and wipes, feminine hygiene products, coffee grounds, cigarette butts, and cat litter can damage a septic system.
- **Don't Strain Your Drain:** Use water efficiently and stagger use of water-based appliances. Too much water use at once can overload a system that hasn't been pumped recently. Fix plumbing leaks and install faucet aerators and water-efficient products.
- **Shield Your Field:** Tree and shrub roots, cars, and livestock can damage your septic drainfield.
- **Pump Your Tank:** Ensure your septic tank is pumped at regular intervals as recommended by a professional and/or local permitting authority.
- **Keep It Clean!** Contamination can occur when a septic system leaks due to improper maintenance. Be sure your drinking water is safe to drink by testing it regularly.

The EPA's SepticSmart Program educates homeowners about proper septic system care and maintenance all year long. In addition, it serves as an online resource for industry practitioners, local governments, and community organizations, providing access to tools to educate clients and residents.

Please join the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) in spreading the SepticSmart Week 2023 message that encourages homeowners and wastewater professionals to maintain septic systems to promote public health, water conservation, and economic wellbeing. Be part of the solution by visiting the EGLE SepticSmart Web site or the EPA SepticSmart Web site for an abundance of resources, videos, and information.

Webinar: Knowing Your Septic System - SepticSmart 2023

EGLE's Onsite Wastewater Program is kicking off SepticSmart Week with a one-hour webinar, "Knowing Your Septic System – SepticSmart 2023," on Sept. 18, which will be recorded. While this event is targeted to homeowners served by a septic system, all interested persons are welcome to attend.

Webinar attendees will learn about:

- the basics of septic systems;
- tools on how to locate a septic system, and
- use, operation, and maintenance tips.

This webinar will provide participants with access to educational materials and a boost in their ability to manage their septic system. Mark your calendar and register today!