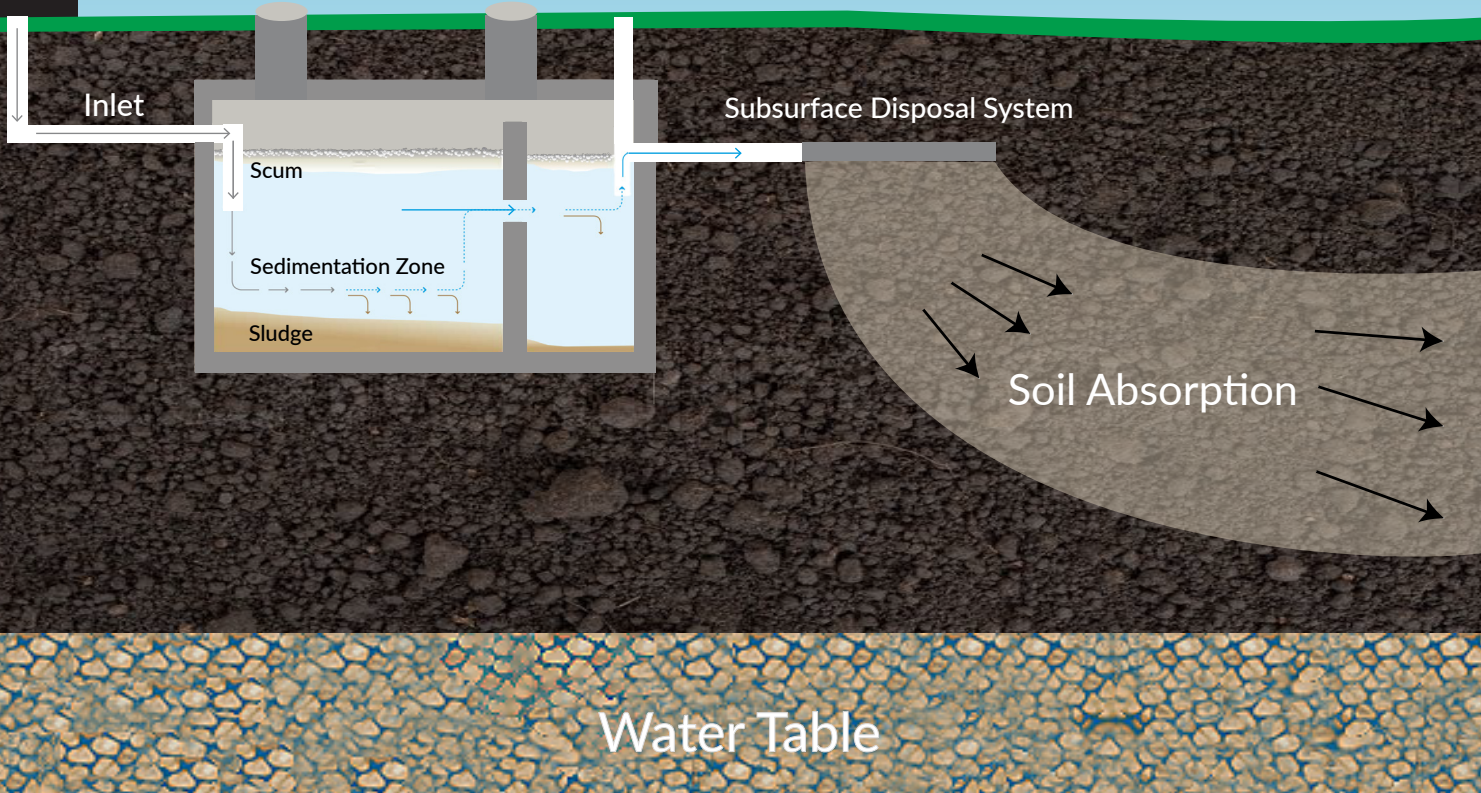
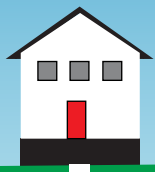


What goes down your drain could potentially harm a community's drinking water.



## Septic Systems within a Protected Public Water Supply Area

If you own or lease property inside a Protected Public Water Supply Area (PPWSA) and operate a private wastewater septic system, there are a few things you should know.

### What is a septic system?

Septic systems are made up of three main components: septic tank, distribution box, and drain field. Wastewater from your home flows into the tank where it is held for a period of time to allow for settling of heavy particles, referred to as sludge. Grease, oil or fat will float to the surface, referred to as scum.

Wastewater from in-between the sludge and scum layers will travel to the distribution box where it is distributed evenly through the drain field. The drain field is an underground area of

perforated pipes surrounded by gravel to allow the wastewater to percolate downward into the soil bed, where natural biological processes will aid in treatment.

### Am I inside a Protected Public Water Supply Area?

If you are unsure whether your septic tank is located within one of these protected areas, you can check the mapping application within the Water Resources Portal here: [maps.gov.nl.ca/water](https://maps.gov.nl.ca/water), call your community office, or contact the nearest Water Resources Management Division (WRMD) office.



### What is the connection between my septic system and the PPWSA?

Being inside a PPWSA adds another layer of importance to monitoring and maintaining your septic system. Improperly designed or maintained septic systems pose a risk for contamination of the drinking water source. Should water contamination be traced back to a poorly maintained septic system, you could be liable under the Water Resources Act.

### How do I take care of my septic system?

#### Do Not...

- Pour grease, oil, or paint thinners down the drain
- Use excessive amounts of domestic solvents and disinfectants
- Flush pharmaceuticals
- Install garbage grinders in kitchen sinks
- Pave or drive over any area of your septic system
- Use septic additives
- Flush sanitary products or other non-biological solids
- Discharge backwash water from water treatment units down the drain

#### Do...

- Clean washer lint traps
- Repair leaking plumbing fixtures
- Monitor your drain field
- Have your tank pumped out on a regular basis
- Keep land above the septic field as open green space
- Direct runoff away from the septic field
- Conserve water

### How do I know when my tank is ready to be pumped out?

This will depend largely on system design and wastewater volumes. On average, single household septic systems will need to be pumped out every three to four years. You should not wait until the system becomes sluggish or fails. Emergency work in the winter months is much more difficult and costly. If you see signs of the following, pump out the septic system immediately to prevent further damage:

- Slow drains and toilets
- Odor from drains or near system
- Water ponding or soggy land above the drain field
- Sewage back-up in basement

Only companies with a Provincial Certificate of Approval for Septic Collection, Transportation and Disposal should be utilized to pump sludge from septic systems.

### Let us work together to safeguard our drinking water supplies.

Water Resources Management Division

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