

Household Product and Water Use Guidelines for Homeowners

□ Water use: Do not use more water than the average daily flow for which the sewage system was designed. A water meter may be used to monitor water use.

□ Product use and disposal: A growing concern is the increased use of strong cleansers, including bleaches, shower cleaners, toilet bowl cleaners, disposable toilet brushes, anti-bacterial soaps and cleaners, and other common products. Excessive use of these products can reduce or eliminate beneficial bacterial activity in the septic tank and soil treatment area. Eliminate use of anti-bacterial products and limit use of bleaches and other strong cleaners.

The disposal of old and unwanted medications, solvents, paints, antifreeze, and chemicals can be particularly troublesome for a system. Even the amounts of medications passing through the body of a person on heavy regimens of certain medications can cause problems for a system.

□ Clear water sources, including water softener and iron filter recharge, high efficiency furnace drip, sump pumps, floor drains, and whirlpool and hot tubs should be routed away from the system. Refer to the Management Plan chart on Water-Use Appliances and Equipment in the home. Discuss with the homeowner the differences between the plumbing codes and septic codes. Help them determine where their clear water sources are being discharged.

□ Basic best practices include using liquid laundry detergents without bleach, using gel dishwashing detergents, spreading laundry and other water uses out throughout the day and the week, avoiding the use of anti-bacterial products, and automatic toilet or shower cleansers, and using natural cleansers when a cleanser is necessary. Do not use the toilet as a trash can – only allow toilet paper and human waste to enter the system. Do not use a garbage disposal, re-route clear water sources, and repair leaks immediately.

□ Homeowners should refer to the Management Plan at least annually to stay on track for management tasks. It is a resource to help manage the system by recording tank cleanings and other maintenance steps, changes in the system and other information. This plan provides the homeowner with tracking tools for the system. When the home is sold, the new homeowner will have a good reference point at which to pick up the management tasks.