



# LOWER TRENT CONSERVATION



## The Simple Guide to... Septic Systems

2010

If you take good care of your system, you will save yourself the time, money and worries involved in replacing a failed system. Failed systems can be hazardous to the environment and your pocketbook. It can degrade water supplies and reduce your property value. Here are some valuable tips to ensure the longevity of your system.

### DO's

- DO** familiarize yourself with the location of your system.
- DO** keep an "as built" system diagram in a safe place for reference.
- DO** divert surface water away from your leaching bed.
- DO** pump out your tank on a regular basis (3-5 years).
- DO** repair leaky plumbing fixtures.
- DO** conserve water to reduce the amount of wastewater that must be treated.
- DO** replace old toilets with low-flush models.
- DO** keep lint out of your septic system by cleaning the lint filter on your washing machine.
- DO** keep the tank access lid secure to the riser all the time.
- DO** keep accurate records of septic system maintenance and service calls.

### DON'T'S

- DON'T** flush hazardous chemicals, paint, cigarette butts, sanitary products, or pharmaceuticals.
- DON'T** use a garbage disposal or garburator.
- DON'T** plant trees or shrubs too close to the system or leaching bed.
- DON'T** use special additives that are touted to enhance the performance of your tank or system.
- DON'T** dig without knowing the location of your septic system.
- DON'T** drive over your tank or leaching bed.
- DON'T** enter a tank - gases and lack of oxygen can be fatal.
- DON'T** connect rain gutters, storm drains or allow surface water to drain into a sewage system.
- DON'T** leave interior faucets on and protect water lines during cold spells — insulate your faucets and plumbing.
- DON'T** connect water softeners to your system, the salt content can destroy the bacteria and tank and can overload the system when backwashing.

### Is your septic system failing?

Here are signs that may indicate a faulty system:

Lawn over leaching bed has patches of abnormally healthy looking grass.

- Lawn above leaching bed is wet.
- Sewage odour in your home or over your leaching bed.
- Large amounts of algae growth occur in or around nearby lakes or water bodies.
- Sinks, showers and toilets back up with sewage or drain slowly.



Produced in conjunction with the  
Ontario Onsite  
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Need more info? ■ 613.394.4829 ■ [information@ltc.on.ca](mailto:information@ltc.on.ca)

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There are minimum separation distances required under the Ontario Building Code surrounding your system and other home and yard items. Remembering these distances and planning your lot accordingly will lead to a healthier, longer-lasting system.

