

Tank Maintenance

Frequency of Pumping

In **new home installations**, the tank should be pumped either before occupying the home or after one to three months of use as a precautionary measure to ensure good bacterial activity and proper operation. In new homes, sewage containing paint, varnish, stain, and other construction-related products can reduce the initial levels of bacterial activity causing damage to the soil treatment area. If construction work is not completed before occupancy, the tank should be pumped once work is complete.

Once a system is known to be operating properly, the guidelines on page 20 can be used to determine pumping frequency. Take into consideration both the calculated guideline results and the condition of the tank (amount of scum and sludge) at the last service visit. **Figure 13** illustrates how a licensed Maintainer will measure the scum and sludge levels in your tank to determine if it needs to be pumped. Homeowners should be present when the maintenance is done or be sure to get this information from the Maintainer.

ALL septic tanks **MUST** be periodically pumped to remove floating scum and sludge that accumulates. Floating scum or sludge that is allowed to enter the soil treatment area will cause expensive and often irreparable damage. Pumping frequency depends on tank size, use, and operating condition.

The pumping frequency guideline calculation for a typical household will suggest a pumping frequency of one to three years. If the result suggests very frequent pumping, the system may need to be upgraded and/or household habits changed. Even if your risk level is low, you should still have your tank evaluated every three years.

The guidelines suggest ways in which you can reduce your impact on your septic system. If you need help interpreting the results of the guidelines, contact a qualified septic system professional for additional advice.

Use the space in the folder accompanying this guide to record your septic tank cleaning dates.

! Never go more than 36 months between cleanings or evaluations! !

Figure 13 – Inspection of scum and sludge layers

