

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q. I have purchased a new home but I'm not sure what type of system I have or where it is located. How do I get information about this?**
- A. There are a few ways you may be able to get this information. If the former owner is available they may be able to provide this information. Depending on the age of the home your local Environmental health Department may have the diagram from when the system was installed.
- Q. How often should I have my septic tank pumped?**
- A. Every 3 – 5 years, more often if you have a garbage disposal or a lot of people living in the residence, less often if it is a vacation home used only on an infrequent basis.
- Q. I'm getting ready to build. How do I get a permit for the septic system?**
- A. Contact you local Environment Health Department.
- Q. I'm getting ready to buy a home that is not new construction. Should I get a septic system inspection even though my mortgage lender doesn't require one?**
- A. Yes. Have the inspection done by a qualified septic system inspector that will perform a complete inspection. Often times a regular housing inspection doesn't include the septic system and you will need to know if proper maintenance of the system has been done.
- Q. Is any one type of system better than another?**
- A. Consult your professional septic installer and get their opinion on different types. The permit you receive from the Environmental Health Department will identify the type of system that should be installed, however you may be able to use another type depending on your individual circumstances. For example, if your permit has a conventional system but you want to save some room you may be able to go with a reduction system. In North Carolina before any system type is approved for use, the product has gone through extensive research.
- Q. My home is new and on some days I smell an odor on the outside of the house. What's wrong with the system?**
- A. Chances are there is nothing wrong with the system. Begin by checking the vent on the roof of the home, it may not be the correct height.
- Q. I was told I have a pump system. What on earth does that mean?**
- A. A pump system is generally installed for one of two reasons:
- 1.) It was not possible due to the elevation of the lot to get gravity from the septic tank to the drain field.
 - 2.) The linear feet of the system exceeded the maximum allowed by the state without having a pump. With a pump system there is a pump in the tank

that pumps the water to the drain field area. The pump is controlled by a switch that is initiated by water level in the tank. There is also an alarm switch that in the event the pump doesn't function properly and the water level gets too high the alarm will go off inside the home to alert you of the problem.

Q. I have a pump tank with this large thing sticking out of the ground. I want to cover this with dirt but the builder said not to, why not?

A. The thing sticking out of the ground is called a riser and it was placed there in the event you have a problem with the pump in the system and there should also be an electrical box beside the riser which should not be covered with dirt.

Q. Can I flush anything I want to?

A. NO! A good rule of thumb is, if it isn't human waste or a human would not eat it, don't flush it.

Q. I'm new to North Carolina. How do I find a qualified septic person?

A. Go to the Services tab on this website and search by county and type of service you need. The companies listed on this site are all members of the NCSTA.