

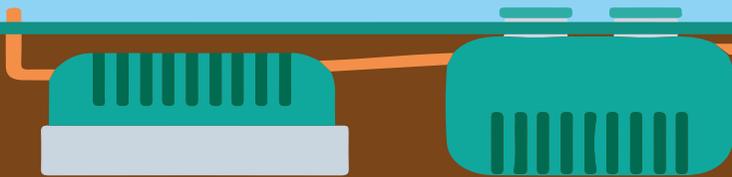


What is an OSSF?

An on-site sewage facility (OSSF) is a wastewater system designed to treat and dispose of effluent on the same property that produced the wastewater. The most common type of OSSF in the United States is a combination of a septic tank and drain field.

In most OSSFs, the system works by recycling biological waste using the natural environment. As wastewater enters the tank, heavier solids will sink to the bottom and lighter solids will float to the top. The wastewater will flow through the tank and out to the drainage field, where the water infiltrates into the soil. Natural organisms consume the available nutrients in the waste and leave behind fully decomposed solids, which later becomes topsoil.

For organisms to decompose the waste, OSSFs need to establish the following: minimum sewage retention, minimum flow between the sewage disposal sites, and access to surface water or water wells.



Why Should I Take Care of My OSSF?

- Keeps system functioning properly
- Helps identify problems early
- Keeps system reliable
- Maintains quality water outflow
- Better for public health and environment
- Upkeep is more cost effective than the cost of repair

OSSFs Require a Permit!

A permit is required to construct, install, alter, extend or repair an OSSF. Here is how you can get a permit:

1. Check on permitting requirements with your local permitting authority (your city or county).
2. After checking with the authorities, submit your plans for your OSSF for review.
3. After submittal, the permitting authority will approve or deny your plan within 30 days.
4. After construction is complete, there will be an inspection of the site by your designated representative.
5. Maintain your OSSF properly.



For more information, go to www.nctcog.org/tmdl

Do's and Do Not's for Your OSSF

- Do only flush the three P's: pee (urine), poo (feces), and (toilet) paper.
- Do maintain a healthy grass lawn over the drainage field to stabilize soil around the septic tank and drainage field.
- Do use liquid laundry detergent.
- Do keep your drainage field clear of standing water by having landscaping and/or gutters move water away from drainage field. If the soil above the drainage field gets too soggy, the system will not work properly.
- Do space out laundry loads when returning from a vacation to avoid overloading the system.

- Do not use drain cleaners or other heavy-duty cleaners. These can harm the microorganisms needed to break down the waste in the OSSF.
- Do not flush feminine hygiene products, wipes, or paper towels down the toilet as these items can clog your OSSF!
- Do not use toilet paper treated with lotions, it does not settle well in your OSSF.
- Do not pour grease down the drain. It will solidify and clog your OSSF.
- Don't pour medicines or hazardous chemicals down the drain or in the toilet. It can kill the microbes needed to make the system function.
- Do not use a garbage disposal for anything other than soft perishables.
- Do not plant trees near a OSSF. The roots may damage the pipes and/or tank.
- Don't park vehicles on the drain field, or construct decks, driveways, playground equipment, or buildings over the drain field.

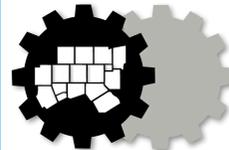
General Maintenance

A properly maintained septic system can last between 25 and 30 years! It's recommended that you pump your OSSF every three to five years to prevent short-circuiting the treatment process and prevent failures in the system. It's important to pump your OSSF to not only make sure your system is functioning properly, but also to ensure that the system isn't full and preventing water draining at a normal rate. A new septic system can cost between \$3,000 and \$10,000, not including permitting and installation, so it's important to maintain your OSSF!



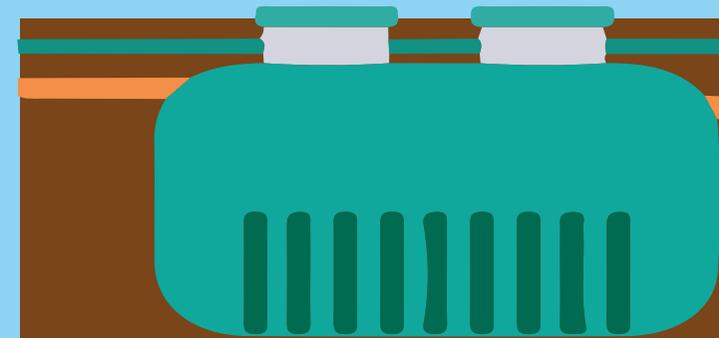
The creation of this brochure was financed through funding from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments is working with stakeholders to implement bacteria TMDLs throughout the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex. To view the I-Plan for Twenty-Two Total Maximum Daily Loads for Bacteria in the Greater Trinity River Region, or to utilize available resources, please visit www.nctcog.org/TMDL.



**North Central Texas
Council of Governments
Environment & Development**

Taking care of your On Site Sewage Facility



**An Instructional Guide
Provided by NCTCOG**