Your Septic Tank System

NPDC

Your on-site septic treatment is a living system and some household products are toxic to its good running. It's important to check that a product – such as a detergent or washing powder – can be used with a septic tank before you buy it.

WHAT CAN GO DOWN THE DRAIN:

- Pee, poo and toilet paper.
- Biodegradable soaps and low-phosphorus detergents.
- Septic-safe disinfectants, bleaches and toilet cleaners in small, dilute amounts.
- Washing machine and dishwasher wastewater.
- Shower and bath wastewater.
- Milk and drinks.

DO NOT PUT THESE DOWN THE DRAIN:

- Flushable wipes, sanitary pads, tampons, disposable nappies, condoms and excessive quantities of toilet paper. (They can block the system.)
- Portable cassette toilet waste. (Use approved dump stations.)
- Excessive volumes of bleaches and chlorine products.
- Alkaline detergents such as caustic soda.
- Acids, pesticides, herbicides and chemicals.
- Paints, solvents, varnishes and paint thinners.
- Antibiotics and medicines.
- Drugs and pharmaceuticals.
- Motor oil.
- Toys, clothing, plastic bags and other non-biodegradable products.
- Storm/roof water.
- Pool or spa waste.

MINIMISE THESE SUBSTANCES:

- Cold-wash laundry products. (These are aggressively alkaline and can cause septic tank and treatment unit failure).
- Bleaches, whiteners, nappy soakers, stain removers and disinfectants.
- Excessive fats, cooking oils and grease. (Scrape plates, wrap the fats in newsprint and place in your food scraps bin, if possible.)
- Antiseptic liquids.
- Solids. (Scrape all dishes and shake dirt/sand off clothes before washing; don't use an Insinkerator.)

KNOW YOUR VOLUME:

Septic tanks have a maximum daily volume that they can treat – a volume that differs depending on the system that's been installed. Avoid overloading the system with high-volume loads by spacing out water use as evenly as possible. For example:

- Do not do wash all the laundry on one day.
- Do not run the washing machine and dishwasher at the same time.