

Septic Tank Pumping Frequency Guidelines

The frequency of a septic tank needing to be pumped depends on the system design including the tank size and on the level of its use. Complete the chart below to help determine how often you should have your tank inspected or pumped.* Repeating this every few years will better identify your needs as your situation changes over time. This chart is meant to only serve as a guideline. Your Maintainer or Service Provider can give you a better estimate of your pumping needs, especially if a relationship over time is established. State and local codes may dictate the maximum amount of time between tank cleanings.

EFFECTS		FACTOR POINTS										
Do you use a garbage disposal or dishwasher with a food grinder?	-- No, enter 0 -- Yes, use every other day or less often, enter 1 -- Yes, use at least once per day, enter 2	_____										
Is sewage pumped out of your basement to the septic tank instead of using gravity flow, and/or is a sump pump connected to the septic system?	-- No, enter 0 -- Yes, enter 1	_____										
Do you have a water softener, iron filter or other water-conditioner unit that is discharged into the septic system?	-- No, enter 0 -- Yes, 1 unit, enter 1 -- Yes, 2 or more units, enter 2	_____										
How often do you do laundry?	2 or less loads/day, enter 0 3 loads/day several times a week, enter 2 4 or more loads/day, several times a week, enter 4	_____										
Do you have a water-conserving top-loading washer or a front-loading washing machine?	-- No, enter 1 -- Yes, enter 0	_____										
Do you use low flow shower heads, toilets, not leave the faucet running, and repair leaks quickly?	-- No, enter 2 -- Sometimes or have made some changes, enter 1 -- Yes, we use low flow and make repairs quickly 0	_____										
Do you use few and mild cleaning products and detergents, limiting use of antibacterial products?	-- No, enter 1 -- Yes, enter 0	_____										
Do you have an in-home business that increases water use? (e.g. daycare, hair salon, taxidermy)	-- No, enter 0 -- Yes, enter 2	_____										
Do you have 3 or more overnight guests at a time, or have large groups visit your home?	-- Never to once a month, enter 0 -- 2-4 nights/month and/or 1 large group, enter 1 -- 5-8 nights/month and/or 2 large groups, enter 2 -- More than 8 nights with more than 3 guests, frequent large gatherings in your home, enter 4	_____										
Is your septic tank (excluding pump tanks) smaller than... 1,000 gallons with 3 or fewer bedrooms 1,500 gallons with 4-5 bedrooms 2,000 gallons with 6 or more bedrooms	-- No, enter 0 -- Don't know, enter 1 -- Yes, enter 2	_____										
Are there more people living in your home than there are bedrooms? <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="padding-right: 20px;">Number of People</td> <td>Bedrooms</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>2 or less</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 or more</td> <td>5 or more</td> </tr> </table>	Number of People	Bedrooms	3	2 or less	4	3	5	4	6 or more	5 or more	-- No, enter 0 -- Yes, enter 2	_____
Number of People	Bedrooms											
3	2 or less											
4	3											
5	4											
6 or more	5 or more											
When was the last time your septic tank was pumped or evaluated/inspected?	-- Less than 3 years ago, enter 0 -- 3-5 years ago, enter 1 -- more than 5 years ago, enter 2	_____										
Add your TOTAL score and enter here. (Compare your score to the Risk Level Chart)		_____										

* This chart and its formulas are based on information from the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Risk Level Chart

Score from Chart	Risk Level	Outcome
0-8 Factor Points	Low Risk	Based on your system and positive use habits, your system should be evaluated once every 2-3 years to determine if tank cleaning is necessary. Do not go more than 3 years without an inspection. Some counties and municipalities require pumping or inspection every 3 years.
9-18 Factor Points	Medium Risk	Based on your tank size and use habits, your system should be evaluated every 1 ½ to 2 ½ years to determine if tank cleaning is necessary.
19-26 Factor Points	High Risk	Based on your tank size and use habits, your system should be evaluated annually (once a year) to determine if tank cleaning is necessary.

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