

# SEPTIC SYSTEMS

## **Septic System Inspections, Evaluations & Structural Addition Application**

In rural areas, many homes do not have connections to municipal sewer lines. Homeowners rely upon privately owned individual septic systems or holding tanks to treat, discharge or store their wastewater. Homeowners must ensure that their septic system is maintained and functioning properly. A malfunction of the septic system can pose a serious health risk to you family and neighbours, and can be very expensive to repair or replace.

## **Septic Systems**

The septic system accepts wastewater from the home (sinks, showers, toilets, washing machine), treats the wastewater and returns the treated effluent to the groundwater. A conventional septic system is comprised of two components: a septic tank and a leaching bed. Under certain site conditions, a conventional system will not provide sufficient treatment of the wastewater. Under these conditions, it is often possible to install an alternative treatment unit. In Ontario homeowners with alternative treatment units are required to have a maintenance contract with a service provider to inspect and maintain their systems.

## **Holding Tanks**

Under exceptional circumstances, the home may have a holding tank as opposed to a septic system. A holding tank must have a service agreement to be pumped regularly, which can add an expense, and pose significant problem for homeowners if not maintained properly.

## **System Replacement or Repair**

A septic system should last anywhere from 20-25 years, or even longer, if it is properly installed and maintained with regular pump-outs every three to five years. The cost of system replacement can vary between \$10,000 to over \$20,000. The cost of the system repair can vary from \$500 for line flushing to \$1,000 for a new septic tank to over \$6,000 to replace clogged leaching bed lines.

## **Structural Addition Applications under the Ontario Building Code Act**

If your house is serviced by a septic system, the local building authority will require a structural addition application completed by a registered septic system professional for any construction on the property that could have an impact on the septic system. This would include any pools, decks, garages, additions to the house or the addition of bathrooms or bedrooms.



