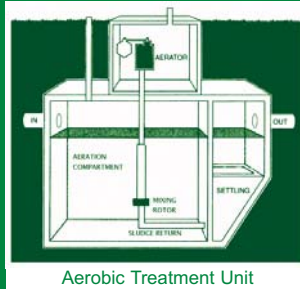


# Other Systems

## Treatment Units

- ◆ There are several new technologies called "treatment units" that are approved under the Ontario Building Code.
- ◆ Treatment units are aerobic devices or filters that provide treatment of sewage either in conjunction with a conventional septic tank or with an aeration chamber. They provide improved effluent quality.



- ◆ These systems require soil bases that may be smaller than those required for conventional systems, making them ideal for use on small or difficult sites.



## Leaching Pits

- ◆ Leaching (grey water) pits are allowed for low water flow conditions in remote areas.

## Pit Privies & Composting Toilets

- ◆ Pit privies (outhouses) or composting toilets may also be used, but must meet current standards.
- ◆ Composting toilets with drains must be connected to a cesspool (drainage pit), and a permit is required.



## Holding Tanks

- ◆ Holding tanks are only permitted under specified circumstances where other alternatives are not feasible.

# Where To Find More Information

- ◆ **Your local Area Municipal Building Dept:**  
Bracebridge 645-5264    Georgian Bay 538-2337  
Gravenhurst 687-3412    Huntsville 789-1751  
Lake of Bays 635-2272    Muskoka Lakes 765-3156
- ◆ **Muskoka Watershed Council**  
[www.muskokaheritage.org/watershed](http://www.muskokaheritage.org/watershed)
- ◆ **Ontario Rural Wastewater Centre**  
[www.orwc.uoguelph.ca](http://www.orwc.uoguelph.ca)
- ◆ **Tarion Warranty Corporation**  
[www.tarion.com](http://www.tarion.com)
- ◆ **Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing**  
[www.obc.mah.gov.on.ca](http://www.obc.mah.gov.on.ca)
- ◆ **On the Living Edge:** Your Handbook for Waterfront Living published by the Living By Water Project. Available from the Muskoka Heritage Foundation at (705) 645-7393.



9 Taylor Road, Box 482  
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Email: [watershed@muskokaheritage.org](mailto:watershed@muskokaheritage.org)

Brought to you by:

# Caring for your Septic System in Muskoka



BEST PRACTICES SERIES

# Your septic system is Your responsibility!

A septic system built to current-day standards and maintained properly may:

- ◆ enhance the value of your property;
- ◆ prevent costly replacement or repairs in the future; and
- ◆ help protect our environment by reducing the risk of surface water and drinking water contamination.

Your septic system is a sewage treatment facility that requires careful attention to design, construction, operation and maintenance.

With proper knowledge and care of your septic system, you will be contributing to the protection of the ground and surface waters that are so important to all who share the memorable experiences of cottage country.

In Ontario, the specifications for construction and maintenance of sewage systems (with a design daily sewage flow of less than 10,000 litres per day) are regulated under the Ontario Building Code. Municipalities are responsible for the inspection and approval of septic system installations.

In Muskoka, your Area Municipal Building Department is the place to find out about permit, design and maintenance requirements for your septic system.



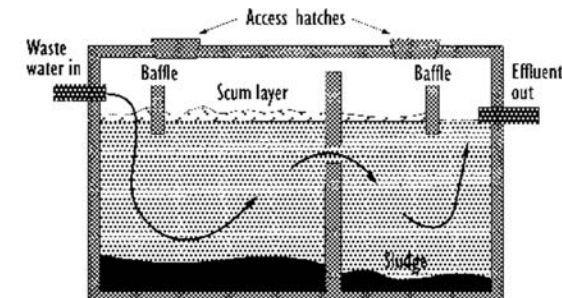
# What can you do regarding your septic system?

- ◆ Obtain and review the permit for your septic system.
- ◆ Keep accurate records of pumping, maintenance and repair.
- ◆ Locate and prepare a sketch of components.
- ◆ Conserve water flowing to the system (i.e. low flush toilets, low flow showerheads).
- ◆ Ensure all fixture drains are connected (as per design).
- ◆ Repair any leaking plumbing fixtures.
- ◆ Do not put paint, petroleum products, grease or pesticides down the drain.
- ◆ Flush only biodegradable products like toilet tissue, not sanitary napkins, diapers, cigarette butts, or paper towels.
- ◆ Avoid high water flows that may overload your system.
- ◆ Install an effluent filter to the outflow pipe leading from your septic tank to your leaching bed. An effluent filter will prevent suspended solids from entering the leaching bed and must be cleaned as prescribed by the manufacturer.
- ◆ Maintain vegetation on top of your leaching bed to aid in evaporation and prevent erosion, but don't allow trees or shrubs to grow too close to the bed or tank as their roots can clog or damage your system.
- ◆ Ensure that renters or guests are aware of your septic system and its proper use.

## Your Septic System

### Septic Tank

- ◆ Locate lids of tank and install risers to aid access if necessary
- ◆ Have scum and sludge layer level checked yearly
- ◆ Have baffles checked and replaced if necessary
- ◆ Have tank pumped as necessary (usually every 3-5 years)
- ◆ Have tank replaced if not sound (ie steel) or if undersized for sewage flows



### Leaching Bed

- ◆ Divert surface runoff and roof drains away from the bed area
- ◆ Avoid compaction of soil over the bed by vehicles, heavy equipment or materials
- ◆ Ensure that unsaturated, porous soil is present under the leaching pipes
- ◆ Avoid heavy lawn watering in or near the bed area
- ◆ Maintain access to sunlight in the bed area to promote evaporation
- ◆ Check for wet spots (ponding) or uneven lush growth on areas over runs which may indicate poor distribution of effluent



### Other Components

- ◆ Locate all pump chambers and ensure that pumps and alarms are working properly
- ◆ Service treatment units and effluent filters as prescribed by the manufacturer
- ◆ Ensure privies, composting toilets and greywater pits are constructed and maintained to current standards

