

Septic Tank Pumping Frequency Guidelines



How often a septic tank needs to be pumped depends on the system design and how your household uses the system. Complete this chart, repeating every few years to gauge how often you should have your tank inspected or pumped. Remember these are guidelines. Your Maintainer or Service Provider can give you a better estimate of your pumping needs. 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-conditioning unit for which recharge water is connected to the septic system? (water softener, iron filter or other devices)

- No, enter 0
- Yes, 1 unit, enter 1
- Yes, 2 units or more, enter 2

How often do you wash laundry?

- Spread out during the week with no more than 2 loads/day, enter 0
- 3 loads/day, several times/week, enter 2
- More than 3 loads/day, several times/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 showerheads, toilets, not leave the faucet running, and repair leaks quickly?

- No, enter 2
- Sometimes or have made some changes, enter 1
- Yes, we make repairs quickly, enter 0

Do you use few and mild cleaning products and detergents, limiting anti-bacterial products?

- No, enter 1
- Yes, enter 0

Do you have an in-home business that increases water use? (such as a daycare, taxidermy shop, hair salon)

- No, enter 0
- Yes, enter 2

Do you have 3 or more overnight guests at a time, or have large groups visit your house?

- Never to once/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 over 3 guests, frequent large gatherings in your home, enter 4

Is your septic tank (not including pump tanks) smaller than...

Tank Capacity	Bedrooms
1,000	3 or fewer
1,500	4 – 5
2,000	6 or more

- No, enter 0
- Don't know, enter 1
- Yes, enter 2

Are there more people living in your home than there are bedrooms?

Number of people	Bedrooms
3	2 or fewer
4	3
5	4
6 or more	5 or more

- No, enter 0
- Yes, enter 2

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 3

Add your TOTAL score, enter here. (Compare your score to the risk level chart below)

Score	Risk Level	Outcome
0 - 8	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 evaluation. Some counties and municipalities require pumping or inspection every 3 years.
9 - 18	Medium Risk	Based on your tank size and use habits, your system should be evaluated every 1½ - 2½ years to determine if tank cleaning is necessary.
19 - 26	High Risk	Based on your tank size and use habits, your system should be evaluated annually to determine if tank cleaning is necessary.

Maintenance and Care