

PREPARING YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM FOR WINTER

3 Helpful Tips to Avoid Winter Problems

The weather is cooling down and soon the ground will be frozen for the winter months. Owners of private septic systems are reminded that costly repairs and problems can often be avoided by proper maintenance of your septic system. To help avoid problems, here are three helpful tips:

1. Leave grass growing on your drain field or add a layer of straw to create a blanket of insulation over the ground. It will also trap snow in the grass or straw and will form a thicker protective blanket. This will help prevent the frost from sinking into and freezing your drain field.
2. Systems installed after July 2000, have tank filters to help hold back material from floating to the drain field. Owners of systems installed after this date should be aware that these filters may require annual or biennial maintenance.
3. Your septic tank should be pumped or inspected at least once every 3 years. Septic system maintainers or pumpers use a sludge judge to measure the level of the scum or sludge in the bottom of the septic tank. If the sludge is one-third or more full in the septic tank, a Wisconsin Certified Wastewater Service Provider should pump out the septic tank. This will prevent solid material from flowing out of the tank and into the drain field, where it could clog the soil pores and prevent the septic effluent from filtering into the ground properly. Maintenance letters are sent out in April of every third year to septic system owners to remind them that their system must be pumped or inspected that year. Those receiving these forms are reminded that a response is due November 15th.

Owners of private septic systems should keep in mind that the cost of regular maintenance to your system is much less costly than to repair or replace a failed system.

###

For more information please contact Jim Kleinhans, Zoning Administrator, or Emily Lund, Assistant Zoning Administrator at (715) 273-6747 or by email at emily.lund@co.pierce.wi.us or jkleinha@co.pierce.wi.us.

