

## Guidance For Common Waterless Toilets

This Guidance is provided for those interested in the use of Waterless Toilets to manage human waste without water carried (flush) toilets, and in what instances it can and cannot be used in Vermont. Please be aware that waterless toilets do not preclude the need for sufficient potable water supply for human hygiene including but not limited to drinking, cooking, and washing) and sanitary disposal of wastewater.

### Outhouse

A seat above hole in the ground, with or without a building or structure around it. Outhouses leach untreated waste and liquids into the environment. Nutrients and harmful pathogens can enter groundwater. **Not allowed for new use in Vermont.**

### Incineration Toilet

Toilet that burns solid waste and liquids. Allowed with a permit. Can reduce leachfield size by 25%. Ash residue must be disposed of at a landfill or a permitted location on the property that meets leach field requirements. The number of incinerating toilets required should be based on the number of users and frequency of use.

### Portable Toilet

A temporary structure delivered to a site containing one or more toilets and one or more tanks with no discharge. Allowed on construction sites and events lasting less than 28 days without a permit. A permit requiring the use of permanent toilet facilities is required for campsites being used more than 12 nights per year.

### Vault Privy

A seat above an underground tank that can be regularly pumped. Leaches no liquid to surrounding soil. Allowed at campsites/campgrounds or remote huts with a permit. Vault privy design and maintenance information developed by the US Forest Services is available at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/t-d/pubs/pdfimage/91231601.pdf> (In-Depth Design and Maintenance Manual for Vault Toilets. 1991)

### Moldering Privy

A raised toilet that uses a slow composting process. Must be permitted and located at a site that meets all leachfield requirements. Composted material must be disposed of at a landfill or permitted site on property. Guidelines for Moldering Privies are contained in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition of the Backcountry Sanitation Manual, published by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and others (<https://appalachiantrail.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/backcountry-sanitation-manual-2-0-august-2014.pdf>).

### Composting Toilet

Allowed with a valid permit. Composting toilets can also reduce the leach field size by 25%. The toilet should be NSF-41 certified or equivalent and properly sized for the intended number of users and the frequency and duration of use. Compost must be disposed of at a landfill or a permitted site on property. At a primitive campsite, it can be used without a permit if waste is disposed of at a landfill.

**This fact sheet is not a replacement for professional advice. If you have questions, please contact the Department of Environmental Conservation Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division's Regional Office Program. Need to know your Regional Office? Go to this website <http://dec.vermont.gov/water/ww-systems#romap> or call (802)-828-1535 for assistance.**

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## The Basics of Operating Innovative/Alternative Onsite Wastewater Systems

### What is an Innovative/Alternative system?

Innovative/Alternative Onsite Wastewater Systems (I/A Systems) are special wastewater treatment (septic) systems used in situations where extra protection of the environment is needed, such as next to lakes and streams, shallow groundwater or on small lots. These systems prevent sewage contamination and protect public health. I/A Systems require a little more work, but using the tips below can help ensure smooth operation.

### How Do I Find Out What Kind of I/A system that I have?

Check your wastewater system and potable water supply permit - if you need to have an Innovative Alternative System, the make and model should be specified there. Keep this information handy in case you have any issues with the system's operation between inspections.

### Keep Your System Turned On

Many I/A Systems use electricity to pump air or move wastewater. Turning off electricity can cause malfunctions and allow improperly treated waste to negatively impact the environment or flow up to ground surface in or nearby your lawn. You can have an authorized service provider winterize the system for seasonally-occupied buildings and turn it back on prior to occupation.

### Flush Only Waste and Toilet Paper

Wastewater systems cannot process harsh chemicals, wipes, and hygiene products. Products may be labeled as flushable, meaning they will go through your toilet, but can damage your wastewater system.

### Inspect and Maintain Your System

Check your water supply and wastewater permit to see if you are required to have a service provider inspect your system annually. Follow your system's operation manual and don't avoid repairs. Keep your authorized service provider's number handy in case of emergencies.

### Learn More

Contact an authorized service provider or VT licensed wastewater and water supply designer with additional questions.

Learn more about wastewater systems in Vermont: <https://bit.ly/vtwwprogram>

Search your permit to see if you have an I/A System: <https://bit.ly/vtwwpermitsearch>

Find a service provider: <https://bit.ly/vtiatechnology>

Find a licensed designer: <https://bit.ly/vtlicenseddesigner>

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## Failed Wastewater Systems ...The Dos and Don'ts

**Don't** ignore the problem! It will not go away and may make a small simple problem into a large and costly one.

**Do** conserve water until the repair is complete.

**Don't** attempt to repair a failing system yourself.

**Do** hire a licensed designer or engineer to evaluate the system and if needed assist in applying for a permit.

**Don't** bury the problem area under more soil, this will not make the problem go away and may cause additional issues.

**Don't** redirect the water to a ditch, storm sewer, stream, abandoned well, or any other body of water or hole in the ground. It is illegal and can cause a serious environmental and health hazard.

**Do** fence off the area where wastewater is surfacing to keep people and animals away from untreated wastewater.

**Do** place hay bales around the area to redirect water back into the problem area and away from surface water.



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## WHO WE ARE

### About Us

We are the Drinking Water & Groundwater Protection Division for the State of Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation. We work with landowners, designers, and engineers permitting potable water and wastewater systems, protecting Vermont's land and water for all. Our focus and mission is to protect human health and the environment while encouraging innovation in design. Please contact your local Regional Office for assistance..

### Regional Office Contacts

Montpelier: 802-828-5034 Springfield:

802-289-0603 Rutland: 802-786-5900

St Johnsbury: 802-751-0130 Essex:

802-879-5656

Web: [www.septic.vt.gov](http://www.septic.vt.gov)

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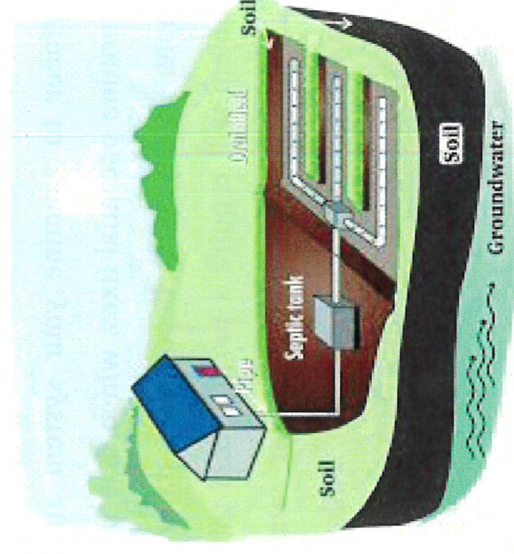


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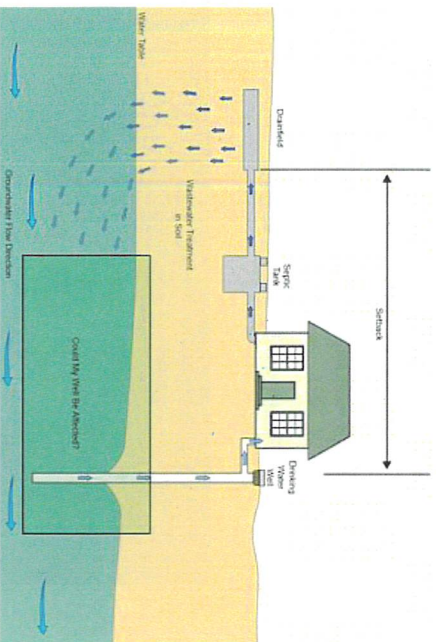
Respect. Protect. Enjoy.



# GUIDE TO FAILED WASTEWATER SYSTEMS







## So, you think your wastewater system may be failed?

Wastewater systems (often referred to as septic systems) can fail for a wide variety of reasons, not all of them controllable. If you suspect you have a failed system, contact a VT State Licensed Designer or Engineer to examine your system and determine potential fixes, which may be simple. Anything beyond a minor problem will require a permit from the Vermont State Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Program. Failed system permits will specify a date for the new system to be installed.

## How to Prevent a Wastewater System from Failing

- ✓ Conserve Water – Utilize low-flow plumbing fixtures and be water aware, particularly in the Spring or after a major weather event.
- ✓ Repair or Replace leaking plumbing fixtures - One sink dripping once every second is adding over 5 gallons to your system every day!
- ✓ Maintain proper landscape on and around your system – wastewater disposal areas (leachfields) should be covered with grass and devoid of trees. Surface water, such as water from downspouts and driveways should be diverted away.
- ✓ Pump your tank regularly – Pumping out solids from a septic tank prevents clogs to the leachfield from forming. Additives have not been shown to be an effective replacement.
- ✓ Limit what goes into the System – don't use it as a trash can or dispose of harmful chemicals.
- ✓ Do not drive or build on any part of your wastewater system!
- ✓ Inspect the wastewater system routinely – check for signs of problems in the system before failure occurs.

## Signs of a Failed Wastewater System

- Wastewater backing up into your toilets, tubs, or sinks.
- Slow-draining fixtures, especially following a weather event.
- The smell of sewage, particularly when accompanied by soggy ground or water discharging over the ground or in a nearby ditch, even if the discharge is not constant.
- A flashing light or beeping alarm in the house or yard indicating a pump is not working or the level in a tank is too high.





## Accessory Dwelling Unit Drinking Water and Wastewater System Fact Sheet

If you are considering constructing an attached or detached accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) on your property, you need to be aware of Vermont's rules regarding drinking water supplies and wastewater (septic) systems (WW Rules). ADU's are not defined in the Vermont WW Rules, but they qualify as living units which are covered in the WW Rules. You and your lessees want reliable water and wastewater systems — contaminated drinking water, sewage backups in living units, or surfacing sewage on your property can impact human health and they are not a recipe for good tenant and/or neighbor relations!

### Examples of Accessory Dwelling Units

Examples of ADUs include: Over-the-Garage Apartments; In-law Apartments; Basement Apartments; Non-mobile, Non-registered RVs; Yurts/Yomes; Cabins/Huts; Mobile Homes; Single Family Residences; Accessory Apartments; Duplexes; Multi-unit Buildings; Condominiums; Tiny homes; & Cottages all on the same property lot as another (primary) dwelling unit.

### Do I Need a Wastewater Permit?

VT WW Rules (<https://bit.ly/vtwwrules>) require all structures for living or work have a water supply and wastewater system that protects human health and the environment. With the exception of some exemptions, changes in use that impact the wastewater output and water usage need an updated permit, for example: adding an apartment above the garage; or converting a bedroom to a studio apartment.

### If I already Have a Wastewater System and Drinking Water Supply for My Property, Why Can't I Just Use It for My ADU?

Water supply/wastewater systems can't handle an unlimited number of people, particularly when it creates a separate household. Adding on new ADUs to a system not designed for them can lead to expensive failures of both the water supply and wastewater systems, creating human and environmental hazards.

### What Is an Accessory Dwelling Unit?

An ADU is a space that has at least one bedroom, one bathroom, and one kitchen. A bedroom is a room or space in a building that is used or serves as sleeping quarters/spaces. A kitchen is a space with a sink designated for the cooking of food. Adding an ADU to your property is considered an increase in wastewater/water flows and requires a permit.

### Drinking Water and Wastewater Have Limits

Drinking water and wastewater systems are engineered for certain amounts of water and sewage per day. Both town sewer/water and onsite wastewater/private wells have limits on the amount of water and sewage they can handle. Not having a proper wastewater and water supply system can negatively impact human and environmental health by spreading dangerous germs or releasing untreated wastewater.

### I Only Want to Short-Term Rent my ADU or Just Use It When Family is Visiting, Do I Still Need a Permit?

A WW Permit is still required. Please see our Short-Term Rental Fact Sheet for details or contact a VT Licensed Designer.



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### **What if my ADU has a composting toilet, doesn't that take care of their wastewater needs?**

No, you must safely dispose of all types of wastewater, not just toilet water. The use of a composting toilet is allowed with a permit and allows for a 25% reduction in the size of your leachfield.

**What if I provide an outdoor pump well/bottled water/portable tank of water/rain water collection system for my ADU, does that take care of my potable water needs?** No, a sufficient quantity of water for guests for personal hygiene and proper sanitation is required. The State of Vermont requires that water to be piped directly to the unit for dependable sanitation purposes. Different standards exist for remote sites, please contact us with questions.

**How do I get a WW Permit?** Contact a State of Vermont licensed wastewater and water supply designer. They can help you understand requirements and assist you in applying for a permit. Go to this link to find a nearby professional: <https://bit.ly/vtlicenseddesigner>.

**I plan to convert a bedroom to create an ADU, do I need a WW Permit?** Most likely yes, however, some exemptions may apply. Please contact a VT Licensed Designer or your Regional Engineer to determine the specifics of your situation.

**This fact sheet is not a replacement for professional advice. If you have questions, please contact the Department of Environmental Conservation Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division's Regional Office Program. Need to know your Regional Office? Go to this website <https://dec.vermont.gov/water/ww-systems#romap> or call (802)-828-1535 for assistance.**

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## **Onsite Wastewater System Guidelines for Patients Taking Antibiotics or Chemotherapy Drugs**

### Chemotherapy Treatment and/or Strong Antibiotics Can Impact an Onsite Wastewater (Septic) System

Proper maintenance, including regular inspections, can ensure your wastewater system remains healthy. Onsite wastewater systems depend on biologic processes to decompose solids and treat the wastewater. Certain medications/treatments can impact your system. Continue reading to learn more about actions you can take to keep your onsite wastewater system healthy if you or a family member are on high-strength chemotherapy drugs or long-term antibiotics.

#### Pump Your Tank

If you receive chemotherapy for cancer treatment, plan to have the tank pumped more frequently. If you need ongoing chemotherapy for an autoimmune condition such as rheumatoid arthritis, the amount of the medication you receive is lower than the amount used to kill cancer cells. However, it may be a good preventive measure to have the tank checked after the first several months.

#### Avoid Use of Harsh Chemicals

Disinfectants, such as large volumes of bleach and strong cleaning products such as quaternary ammonia, can impact the bacteria that are necessary for your wastewater system to function properly. When on chemotherapy treatment or long-term antibiotics, avoid using things like harsh cleaning products. Bacterial additives are not recommended for normal maintenance.

Learn more about wastewater systems and medications from Michigan State University Extension:

<https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/can-medications-harm-my-septic-system>.

Learn more about Vermont's wastewater and water supply program at:

<https://dec.vermont.gov/water/ww-systems>.

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## Camping & Outdoor Stay Drinking Water/Wastewater System Guidelines

Are you thinking of using websites or apps like Hip Camp\*, Tentrr\* or The Dyrty\* to host vacationers on your property? Read on to learn important information related to drinking water and wastewater requirements.

### Camping & Outdoor Drinking Water/Wastewater Permitting Questions

#### What is a campsite?

An area available for overnight vacation or recreational purposes, including areas for tents, yurts, tepees, lean-to, cabins, or recreational vehicles (RVs). Primitive camping is not regulated (see FAQ section). Campsites may need water, toilet facilities, and/or a dumping station.

#### Are you considered a campground?

The State of Vermont defines a campground as four (4) or more campsites on a lot for vacation or recreational purposes. You can be considered a campground even if you don't charge any money.

#### What do campsites/campgrounds have to do with wastewater and drinking water permits?

Campgrounds and campsites may be regulated under Vermont's Wastewater and Water Supply rules. The regulations are called the Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply Rules (<https://bit.ly/vtwwrules>). You will need a wastewater/water supply permit if you are operating, creating, or modifying a campground or if you host campers for more than twelve (12) nights a year. If you need help in determining if your land falls under these rules, please contact a Vermont licensed wastewater and water supply designer (see FAQ section for designer contact list link).

#### What is considered wastewater?

Wastewater can include things like human waste (urine and/or feces) toilet water, bathing water, water after handling or preparing food, cleaning dishes, or washing your hands or equipment. If you have a question about wastewater, contact the Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division.

#### Campsites may still require a water supply/wastewater permit?

If you have more than four (4) campsites, then you will need to contact a Vermont licensed wastewater/water supply designer to evaluate your wastewater/water supply needs and VT WW Rule/permit requirements. Using existing water/wastewater systems or creating new systems may also require a permit.

#### Why regulate campsites/campgrounds?

Great question! Just like homes, The State wants to make sure we are properly disposing of human waste or other contaminated wastewater to protect human health and the environment. If not done properly, wastewater can contaminate nearby water bodies like rivers or lakes. After all, we all live downstream.

#### If you are considered a campground, you may need a permit and may need to meet these requirements:

- Have a potable water supply and wastewater system that meets the VT WW Rules.
- Campsites need toilet facilities within 400 feet (these can be water carried toilets with either septic systems or sewer connections, vault privies, composting toilets, or incinerating toilets).
- One toilet is needed for each group of 10 or fewer campsites.
- A water faucet must be within 400 feet of any campsite. Common drinking vessels are not allowed.
- One waste dumping station is needed per campground, unless:
  - All campsites have individual sewer service lines, or the campground consists entirely of tent sites and does not allow use of camping units with interior plumbing.
- Each dumping station in a campground:
  - Can serve no more than 100 campsites
  - Must have a concrete catchment that slopes to the sewer inlet; and have pressurized water to flush and clean the catchment after each use.



No wastewater/water supply permit is needed if:

- There are fewer than four (4) campsites;
- No more than twelve (12) nights of camping at a campground per year;
- Sites are not connected via pipe to water or sewer services;
- There is no discharge of wastewater to the ground;
- The campground or campsite meets WW Rule exemptions; and
- Site is used only for vacation or recreation.

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How do I get a wastewater system and potable water supply permit?

Contact a State of Vermont licensed wastewater and water supply designer. They can help you understand the requirements and assist you in applying for a permit. Please reference this link to find a nearby professional: <https://bit.ly/vtlicenseddesigner>.

What can I use at a campsite for wastewater disposal?

All campground wastewater systems require a VT WW permit. Portable toilets can be used if the property has fewer than four (4) campsites. If independent from a building's water system, composting toilets, incineration toilets, and vault privies can be used for campsites and campgrounds.

Do I need to provide potable water for a campsite/campground?

Potable water needs to be provided for campgrounds, which requires a VT WW permit. Contact a State of Vermont Licensed Wastewater/Potable Water Supply Designer with additional questions.

What is 'primitive camping'?

Camping that involves temporary overnight occupancy in a natural setting without a potable water supply, a wastewater system, picnic tables, or other developed structures or facilities and that is left in its original condition so there is no, or minimal, evidence of human visitation.

**Learn more about Vermont's wastewater and water supply program at:**

<https://dec.vermont.gov/water/ww-systems>

**Check out your wastewater and water supply permit at:**

<https://bit.ly/vtwwpermitsearch>

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**\*The State of Vermont does not endorse the use or legitimacy of these apps. Names are provided for reference only.**

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## Short-Term Rental Drinking Water and Wastewater System Fact Sheet

If you are considering renting all or part of a home or structure on a short-term basis you need to be aware of Vermont's rules regarding drinking water supplies and wastewater systems (WW Rules). You and your guests want reliable water and wastewater systems— sewage backups on your property aren't a recipe for 5-star reviews!

**Remember, Learn Before You List!**

### Examples of Short-Term Rentals

Examples of short-term rentals include: Non-mobile, non-registered RV connected to a water supply or wastewater system; Yurts/ Yomes; Cabins/Huts; Mobile homes; Single family residences; Accessory Apartments; Duplexes; Multi-unit buildings; Condominiums; and Seasonal Camps & Cottages.

### Do I Need a Wastewater Permit?

VT WW Rules (<https://bit.ly/vtwwrules>) require all structures for living or work have a water supply and wastewater system that protects human health and the environment. Except for some exemptions, (see remote huts and primitive camps) changes in use that impact waste output and water usage need an updated permit, for example, adding studio apartment to your property.

### Short-Term Rentals for Camping, Primitive Camps or Remote Huts only Accessible by Foot or Boat

A WW Permit may still be required; however, additional options are available for water sources and wastewater disposal. Please see our Camping/Campground Guidance document for details or contact a VT Licensed Designer.

### What Do Short-Term Rentals Have to Do with Wastewater and Drinking Water?

Water supplies and wastewater systems can't handle an unlimited number of daytime and overnight guests. Drinking Water supplies and wastewater systems are designed for a limited number of people, typically based on the bedroom count.

### What Is a Bedroom?

A bedroom is a room in a building that is used or serves as sleeping quarters/spaces. Adding beds to places like a screened in porch or other room in the building is considered a bedroom. Adding a "bedroom" to your building is considered an increase in wastewater/water flows and requires a permit.

### Drinking Water and Wastewater Have Limits

Drinking water and wastewater systems are engineered for certain amounts of water and sewage per day. If you have a local permit to use your property as a short-term rental it is important to know if its water supply and wastewater system has the capacity to serve your rental guests. Both town sewer/water and onsite wastewater/private wells have limits on the amount of water and sewage they can handle. Not having a proper wastewater and water supply system can negatively impact human and environmental health by spreading dangerous germs or releasing untreated wastewater.



How Do I Determine the Number of People My System and Supply are Designed to Serve?

Typically, wastewater systems are designed for two people per bedroom, up to three bedrooms, and one person per bedroom beginning with the fourth bedroom. **On occasion, a wastewater system may be oversized, which may allow greater occupancy.** The table below lists the typical capacity for certain size dwellings and can help you decide how to list your property (**note these examples are for reference only**).

Number of Bedrooms	Typical wastewater/water system capacity
1-bedroom	2 people
3-bedroom	6 people
4-bedroom	7 people
6-bedroom	9 people

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

**What if my short-term rental unit has a composting toilet, doesn't that take care of the wastewater needs?**

No, you must safely dispose of all types of wastewater, not just toilet water.

**What if I provide bottled water for my short-term rental unit guests, does that take care of my potable water needs?** No, a sufficient quantity of water for guests for personal hygiene and proper sanitation is required. Different standards exist for remote sites, please contact us with questions.

**How do I get a WW Permit?** Contact a State of Vermont licensed wastewater and water supply designer. They can help you understand requirements and assist you in applying for a permit. Go to this link to find a nearby professional: <https://bit.ly/vtlicenseddesigner>.

**I want to add an in-law apartment, tiny home, yurt, etc., do I need a WW Permit?** Very likely, however, if it is a primitive camp or remote hut, it may be exempt. Please contact a VT Licensed Designer to apply for a permit.

**I plan to convert a bedroom to create a short-term rental apartment, do I need a WW Permit?** Most likely yes, however, some exemptions may apply. Please contact a VT Licensed Designer or your Regional Engineer to determine the specifics of your situation.

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**Please be aware that other State, Local, or Federal permits may be required for short-term rentals and related land uses.**

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## Mobile Food Unit Water and Wastewater Permit Guidelines

### What is a mobile food unit?

Mobile food units can include food trucks, trailers, and carts which were envisioned to be fully self-contained and mobile (registered with the Department of Motor Vehicles to travel over roads). A temporary structure, such as a shed or container, may fall under different permitting and regulations, continue reading to learn more.

### Are you a food truck or trailer owner?

Most food trucks have self-contained potable water and wastewater storage and move frequently; therefore, they are not likely to need a wastewater permit. If you decide to make your mobile food unit stationary or want to hook up to an external water supply or wastewater system, keep reading to understand the rules and regulations you need to know.

### Are you thinking of continuously parking your food truck in one location?

If your food truck is no longer able to readily move at any time, it may be considered a permanent structure and would require a permit under Vermont's Wastewater System and Potable Water Supply (WW Rules)

<https://bit.ly/vtwwrules>.

### Below are some questions to ask yourself:

- If connected to any external potable water and/or wastewater components, is my mobile food unit parked continuously (24-hours/day), for a total of more than 12 days per year and/or 4 consecutive days?
- If not connected to water and sewer, am I parking continuously (24-hours/day) at a location for a total of more than 28 days per year?
- Am I attaching a deck, stairs, skirting, insulation, or a foundation to the mobile food unit?
- Can I no longer easily move locations, or is anything preventing the mobile food unit from being driven to service the water and wastewater tanks, such as: removal of wheels, need for a special permit for travel on Vermont roads, lack of vehicle registration, or lack of a current inspection sticker?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, you may need a wastewater and water supply permit, continue reading for more information.

### What does this have to do with a wastewater/drinking water permit?

Wastewater and water systems on mobile food units are designed to be self-contained, limited, and emptied and filled on a regular basis. Making a mobile food unit unmovable, and increasing the number of people you can serve, requires increases in water demand and waste generation. Page 2 details the operation and permitting requirements for water and wastewater permits regarding mobile food units and the properties on which they are parked.

### What information does my designer need for my wastewater permit application?

- Permit application fee.
- Location and/or remote base(s) of operation and documented approval by landowner.
- Description of the food service and potable water and wastewater needs (number of food service employees, dishwashing, patron seating, etc.).



- A list of equipment and activities at the service base and/or remote base(s) (such as potable water source, wastewater disposal, and kitchenware washing).
- A plan for where and how potable water will be obtained and where wastewater disposal will occur, including:
  - Documentation regarding existing uses of the properties that provide these services.
  - Existing (permitted/unpermitted) capacities of potable water supplies and wastewater disposal systems.
  - Anticipated potable water supply and wastewater disposal flow quantities on a maximum daily basis.
  - Required expansion of capacities of either potable water or wastewater services if needed, along with full engineering plans and documentation, if applicable.
- Contingency plans for provisions of potable water and wastewater disposal.

What's next? You'll need to do a few things after you receive your permit:

- Provide a copy of your permit to the Vermont Health Department and Department Liquor & Lottery, if applicable.
- Ensure that your installation certification is submitted by your Designer to the Drinking Water Groundwater Protection Division.
- Record the permit and installation certification with the town record department.
- Retain a copy for your records.

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

#### 1. Why are the potable water and wastewater permits associated with the property and not the food truck?

The treatment and dispersal capacities of the property where the mobile food unit is operating need to be confirmed. Potable water supply and wastewater systems may need to be designed and submitted with a permit application. Once a permit is issued, the system(s) needs to be installed prior to use of the property to protect public health and environmental quality.

#### 2. Can I avoid a permit if I use external water tanks and wastewater tanks connected to the mobile food unit by hoses?

No. External water connections must be from a private or public water supply as outlined in the WW Rules. External wastewater holding tanks for commercial sinks, drains, and other food preparation wash water are not allowed under the WW Rules.

#### 3. Where can I get a copy of the WW Rules?

A copy of the rules is available online at:

<https://bit.ly/vtwwrules>.

#### 4. Who can prepare a Permit Application?

A state of Vermont Licensed Wastewater/Water Supply Designer must prepare and submit a permit application. For a list of designers please go to:

<https://bit.ly/vtlicenseddesigner>.

This fact sheet is not a replacement for professional advice. If you have questions, please contact the Department of Environmental Conservation Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division's Regional Office Program. Need to know your Regional Office? Go to this website: <https://dec.vermont.gov/water/ww-systems#romap> or call (802)-828-1535 for assistance.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. To file a discrimination complaint, for questions, free language services, or requests for reasonable accommodations, please contact ANR's Nondiscrimination Coordinator at [ANR.CivilRights@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.CivilRights@vermont.gov) or visit ANR's online Notice of Nondiscrimination.





## How to Inspect a Soil-Based Wastewater System?

**Do** determine how quickly sludge and scum accumulate in the tank with semi-regular inspections. The tank should be full of wastewater.

**Do** have the sludge and scum pumped out of the septic tank when needed.

**Don't** turn off pumps or other electrical components, they are important and necessary components of the system and should be tested to determine if functioning correctly.

**Do** hire a licensed designer or engineer to inspect the system. They will research the size and location of the system components, expected flows, and the vitality of the leach field by inspecting it for a proper aerobic environment.

**Don't** purposefully stress a system to see if it is failed.

**Do** clean the effluent filter annually.

**Don't** dye test the system, the water flows from a dye test can overstress a system that was functioning and potentially cause it to fail.

**Do** install risers over the tank to provide easier access for the measuring and pumping of solids and the cleaning of the effluent filter.

## Who We Are

### About Us

We are the Drinking Water & Groundwater Protection Division for the State of Vermont's Agency of Natural Resources, Department of Environmental Conservation. We work with landowners, designers, and engineers permitting potable water and wastewater systems, protecting Vermont's land and water for all. Our focus is to protect human health and the environment while encouraging innovation in design. Please contact your local Regional Office for assistance and a list of area designers and engineers.

### Regional Office Contacts Montpelier:

802-828-5034 Springfield:

802-289-0603 Rutland: 802-786-5900

St Johnsbury: 802-751-0130 Essex:

802-879-5656

Web: [www.septic.vt.gov](http://www.septic.vt.gov)

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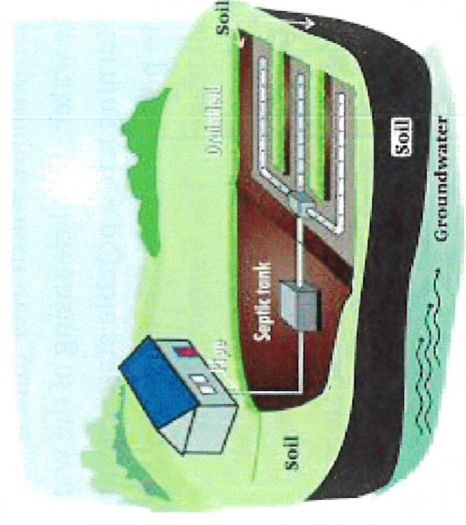
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AGENCY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Respect. Protect. Enjoy.



## Homeowners Guide to Onsite Wastewater Systems







## So, you want to know more about your soil-based wastewater system?

Wastewater systems (often referred to as septic systems) provide treatment for wastewater from a home or business, eventually returning clean water to the local water table. A healthy wastewater system contains solids, scum, and grease in a septic tank and transports water to an area (leachfield) where it can be exposed to an aerobic microbe environment, which over time will clean the water. Final cleansing of the water, returning it to a potable state, requires it to percolate through soils, filtering it as it travels. The Vermont State Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division works with designers and engineers to determine the most suitable location and design for soil-based wastewater systems throughout the State, protecting the vitality of Vermont's groundwater.

## Daily Wastewater System Management

- ✓ Conserve Water – Utilize low-flow plumbing fixtures and be water aware, systems do not have unlimited capacity.
- ✓ Repair or Replace leaking plumbing fixtures – water conservation extends the life of your system!
- ✓ Maintain proper landscape on and around your system – leachfields should be covered with grass and devoid of trees. Surface water, such as water from downspouts and driveways should be diverted away.
- ✓ Pump your tank regularly – Pumping out solids from a septic tank prevents clogs to the leachfield from forming. Additives have not been shown to be an effective.
- ✓ Limit what goes into the System – don't use it as a trash can, grease trap, or dispose of harmful chemicals.
- ✓ Do not drive or build on any part of your Wastewater System!
- ✓ Inspect the Wastewater system routinely – check for signs of problems in the system before failure occurs. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!



Rev. 2-2025

## Preventive Maintenance Record

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Done: \_\_\_\_\_  
 By: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Done: \_\_\_\_\_  
 By: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work Done: \_\_\_\_\_  
 By: \_\_\_\_\_

### Your Wastewater System Installer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date System installed: \_\_\_\_\_

### Your Septic Pumper

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

