

News from the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services

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NHDES Encourages Resident's to Take Part in the 3rd Annual EPA Septic Smart Week

Concord, NH - The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) is encouraging homeowners and communities to participate in Septic Smart Week, September 21 to 25, 2015, by inspecting and maintaining their septic systems

About 6 out of every 10 households in New Hampshire depend on septic systems or other types of onsite systems to treat their wastewater. These systems are critical in protecting the state's water resources. These water resources are enjoyed by everyone whether you are swimming in Lake Winnepesaukee, kayaking on the Piscataqua River, fishing on the Merrimack or Connecticut rivers or taking a drink of water out of your own kitchen faucet.

Failure to maintain a septic system can lead to wastewater backups and overflows, which can result in costly repairs and potential health and water quality problems. An improperly maintained system can even be a significant source of ground water contamination and potential impact your drinking water well.

During Septic Smart Week, The NH Department of Environmental Services will be distributing the EPA septic smart brochure to septic haulers so they can help educate consumers about their septic systems. The EPA will be providing homeowners with easy to remember maintenance tips, including:

- **Protect It and Inspect It:** Homeowners should generally have their system inspected every three years by a licensed contractor. Tanks should be pumped when necessary, typically every three to five years.
- **Think at the Sink:** Avoid pouring fats, grease and solids down the drain. These substances can clog a system's pipes and drainfield.
- **Don't Overload the Commode:** Only put things in the drain or toilet that belong there. For example, coffee grounds, paint, dental floss, disposable diapers and wipes, feminine hygiene products, cigarette butts and cat litter can all clog and potentially damage septic systems.
- **Don't Strain Your Drain:** Be water efficient and spread out water use. Fix plumbing leaks and install faucet aerators and water-efficient products. Spread out laundry and dishwasher loads throughout the day - too much water at once can overload a system that hasn't been pumped recently.
- **Shield Your Field:** Remind guests not to park or drive on a system's drainfield, where the vehicle's weight could damage buried pipes or disrupt underground flow.

For more Septic Smart information, including a homeowner's guide, go to www.epa.gov/septicmart.