

Be SepticSmart: Protect Your Health, Preserve the Environment

Approximately 50% of all occupied homes in North Carolina rely on septic systems — also known as on-site systems, decentralized wastewater treatment, cluster systems, and private sewage — to collect, treat and disperse their wastewater. This reliance on septic systems has remained consistent for more than 20 years and spans all 100 counties.

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is proud to recognize SepticSmart Week, taking place from Sept. 16-20, 2024. This annual event focuses on educating homeowners and communities about the importance of proper care and maintenance of their septic systems [SepticSmart Week | US EPA](#).

Septic systems, when properly maintained, are environmentally friendly and protect public health. These systems can serve as a long-term solution for wastewater treatment if proper attention is given to their use, inspection, operation, and management. It is essential for all North Carolinians who rely on septic systems to understand and follow best management practices to maintain this critical part of their home infrastructure.

In support of this effort, Governor Roy Cooper has officially proclaimed SepticSmart Week in North Carolina. The proclamation can be found at <https://governor.nc.gov/governor-proclaims-septic-smart-week-2024/open>.

The EPA's [SepticSmart initiative](#) is a national public education campaign offering valuable resources to homeowners, local organizations, and government leaders. These materials explain how septic systems work and provide practical tips for their upkeep.

- **Think at the Sink!** What goes down the drain has a big impact on your septic system. Fats, grease, and solids can clog a system's pipes and drainfield.
- **Don't Overload the Commode!** A toilet is not a trash can. Disposable diapers and wipes, feminine hygiene products, coffee grounds, cigarette butts, and cat litter can damage a septic system.
- **Don't Strain Your Drain!** Use water efficiently and stagger use of water-based appliances. Too much water use at once can overload a system that hasn't been pumped recently.
- **Shield Your Field!** Tree and shrub roots, cars, and livestock can damage your septic drainfield.
- **Keep It Clean!** Contamination can occur when a septic system leaks due to improper maintenance. Be sure your drinking water is safe to drink by testing it regularly.

- **Protect It and Inspect It!** Regular septic system maintenance can save homeowners thousands of dollars in repairs and protect public health.