



What Every Tenant Should Know About Septic Systems

The Basic Dos and Don'ts for Living in a Septic Home

If you're renting a home with a septic system, you might not think twice about what goes down your drains or into your toilet—but you should. Septic systems are delicate and require different care than homes connected to city sewer lines.

Even though you may not own the property, you still play a major role in keeping the system running properly. A single mistake could lead to clogged pipes, sewage backups, or even damage that you could be held responsible for.

This guide covers the **basic do's and don'ts** every tenant should know to keep their rental home's septic system healthy—and avoid emergency calls or repair bills.



**Septic
Protection**
.com



What Tenants *Should* Do

✓ Use Water Wisely

Septic systems can only handle so much water at a time. Spacing out water-heavy tasks like laundry, dishwashing, and long showers helps prevent overload.

Tip: Try to do only one or two loads of laundry per day—not all in one afternoon.

✓ Use Septic-Safe Toilet Paper

Look for toilet paper labeled “*septic-safe*” or *biodegradable*. These types break down faster and reduce the chance of clogs.



**Septic
Protection**
.com

✓ **Run Full Loads Only**

Run your dishwasher and washing machine only when they're full. This saves water and reduces strain on the system.

✓ **Report Leaks Promptly**

Leaky faucets, running toilets, or dripping showerheads waste water and can overwhelm the septic system over time. Always report leaks to your landlord right away.

✓ **Keep a Maintenance Log (If Shared)**

If your landlord encourages it—or if multiple tenants share the system—track when the tank was last pumped, inspected, or serviced. This helps avoid misunderstandings and keeps everyone accountable.



✗ What Tenants *Should NOT Do*

✗ Don't Flush Anything but Toilet Paper

No wipes, paper towels, feminine hygiene products, condoms, diapers, or floss. Even “flushable” wipes are a common cause of septic clogs and damage.

Rule of Thumb: If it wasn't eaten first, don't flush it.

✗ Don't Pour Grease or Oil Down the Drain

Cooking grease, oils, and fats can solidify in your pipes and septic tank, leading to blockages.

Instead: Let grease cool, pour it into a jar, and dispose of it in the trash.

✗ Don't Use Harsh Drain Cleaners or Chemicals



✗ Don't Park Vehicles or Set Up Pools Over the Drainfield

If you're using the yard for outdoor activities, avoid placing heavy objects like RVs, fire pits, or even inflatable pools over the drainfield. This area needs to "breathe" and absorb wastewater from the tank.

✗ Don't Ignore Slow Drains or Gurgling Sounds

If your sinks, showers, or toilets are draining slowly—or making strange bubbling noises—it could be the start of a backup. Let your landlord know immediately.

Quick Tips for Septic-Smart Tenants

- Use a hair catcher in drains to prevent buildup.
 - Limit use of garbage disposals (or avoid them altogether).
 - Don't plant trees or shrubs near the tank or drainfield.
 - Know where the septic tank and drainfield are located on the property.
 - Ask your landlord when the system was last pumped or inspected.
-



A Shared Responsibility

Even if you're not the homeowner, **you can still help protect the system** and avoid frustrating plumbing issues during your tenancy. By following simple septic-friendly habits, you not only protect the home—you protect your own comfort and peace of mind.

A single mistake can cost thousands to repair, but a little prevention can go a long way.

Final Word for Tenants

Living in a home with a septic system isn't complicated—it just takes a little awareness. Treat the system with care, communicate with your landlord about any issues, and follow the simple dos and don'ts outlined here.

Your landlord will thank you—and your plumbing will too.