



DO YOU
KNOW?
YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

In Wellfleet, we all have on-site septic systems.

- ▶ Be a **SEPTIC-MINDFUL** shopper
- ▶ **CONTROL** what goes in
- ▶ **CRANK IT UP** with additives
- ▶ **PUMP** regularly

Here are **6 SIMPLE STEPS** to spare you costly repairs and system replacements. →

Get to Know Your Septic System.*

Properly operating septic systems work as “living filters” that treat and decontaminate wastewater from your property. **With proper care, you can add decades to the life of your system**—and avoid costly emergency repairs.

1 Flush responsibly.

Don't treat your toilet like a garbage can, and look for septic-compatible toilet paper. **Never flush:**

- Disposable diapers & baby wipes
- Feminine hygiene products
- Condoms
- Dental floss, cotton swabs, etc.
- Cigarettes & cigarette butts
- Cat litter
- Coffee grounds
- Paper products

3 No grease down the drain!

Pouring grease and fats down the drain is a **sure way to clog your leach field**. (Replacement cost: \$5,000–\$10,000.)

5 Pump it up with safe additives.

Inexpensive products based on bacteria, yeast, baking soda, and sugar are available to **energize the biological activity** that drives your septic system. (Use Mass.-approved products.)

6 Plan a regular pump schedule.

Don't wait until you have a problem—every 3 years is recommended for year-round homes. With **regular inspection and pumping**, your septic system could last 30 years or longer.

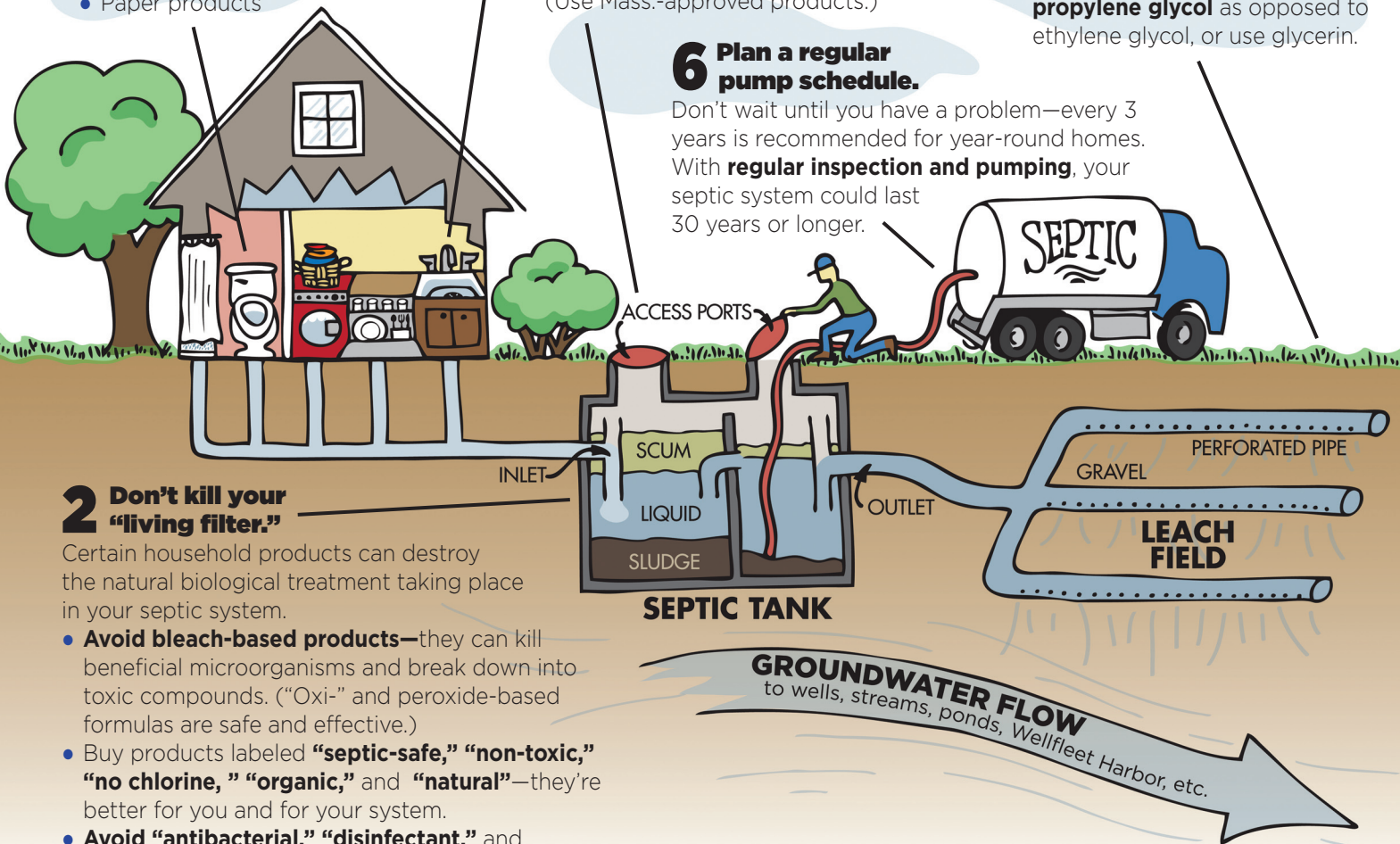
4 Control chemical runoff & inputs from your yard.

- Use **organic** fertilizers and pesticides.
- **Carefully store/dispose** of gasoline, solvents, and other chemical agents.
- If you winterize your plumbing with antifreeze, look for the safer **propylene glycol** as opposed to ethylene glycol, or use glycerin.

2 Don't kill your “living filter.”

Certain household products can destroy the natural biological treatment taking place in your septic system.

- **Avoid bleach-based products**—they can kill beneficial microorganisms and break down into toxic compounds. (“Oxi-” and peroxide-based formulas are safe and effective.)
- Buy products labeled **“septic-safe,” “non-toxic,” “no chlorine,” “organic,”** and **“natural”**—they're better for you and for your system.
- **Avoid “antibacterial,” “disinfectant,”** and **“sanitizing”** soaps—they also kill beneficial bacteria.
- **Never flush old medications!** Contain them, and then throw them out.



* This illustration is representative—septic systems come in a variety of configurations. **To determine your system's configuration and location**, check your site plans, or call the Wellfleet Board of Health at (508) 349-0308.

Signs of Trouble

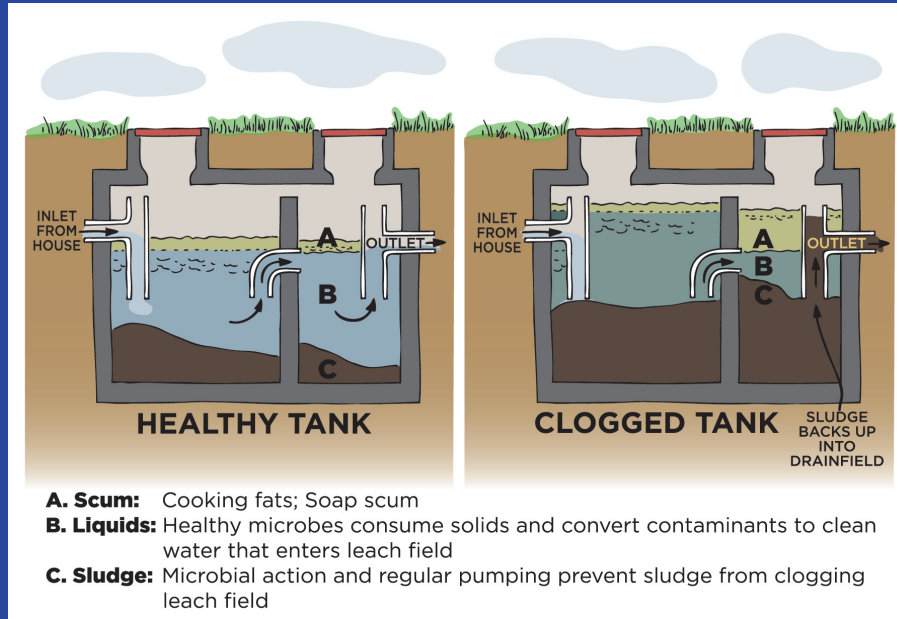
It's time to call a professional if you notice any of the following:

- **Foul odors** in your home or yard
- **Slow or backed-up** drains, toilets, sinks
- **Lush plant growth or soggy, wet ground** over your leach field
- **Gurgling sounds** in the plumbing system
- **Surfacing sewage**

What Should You Do?

- Call a licensed inspector/pumper, or
- Call the Wellfleet Board of Health at **(508) 349-0308**, or
- Go to: **www.wellfleetma.org** for tips and more information

The health of your drinking water and Wellfleet's water resources depend on good septic management.



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Think About the Drink!

YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

prevents contaminated water from entering your drinking water and Wellfleet's shellfishing and recreational water resources.

REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT

of your system can be extremely costly—and is preventable.

CARE & MAINTENANCE

are the keys to septic system functionality and longevity.

For more information:

www.wellfleetma.org

Wellfleet Board of Health:

(508) 349-0308

