

Robson Environmental Services



What you need to know about
SEPTIC TANKS



Robson Environmental Services Phone 03 349 8871 or 027 432 4342

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SEPTIC TANKS

There are many myths and misconceptions surrounding the use of septic tanks. After 35 years in the Liquid Waste business, these are my views of what you should be doing with your septic.

About 80% of all septic tanks we do work on are not functioning properly. The cause of failure is more often than not household chemicals. Your tank needs bacteria to flourish so as to keep the separation of water from solids and chemicals stop this happening and no matter what type of tank you have **this affects you.**

ANY PRODUCT THAT SAYS IT WILL KILL BACTERIA WILL KILL YOUR SEPTIC!

Some common products that are excellent for some things but may affect your septic:

JANOLA

HANDY ANDY

CLEANER

NAPPY SAN

ALL DRAIN CLEARERS

CAUSTIC DISHWASHER

HANDY HINTS

REMEMBER ALL DRAINS END UP IN YOUR SEPTIC TANK!

WHITES: If you want to clean whites, soak in a bucket (not your laundry tub or washing machine) then throw the water outside as long as it does not go down your drain.

WASHING FLOORS: When washing your floor, use a bucket then dispose of the water outside as long as it does not go down your drain.

DISHWASHERS: Only use your dishwasher when it is full or once a day. Try and cut back the amount of chemicals you use, most machines will clean efficiently with half the chemicals recommended by manufactures.

WASTE MASTERS: If you have a waste master, your tank will need to be emptied more often simply because of the amount of solids going into it.

THE LOO

This is a difficult one, nothing you put in there to clean it will do the tank any good. My recommendation is to use all cleaners in moderation and only when really needed. The toilet bowl is a glazed surface and does not need a huge amount of chemicals thrown at it.

Common Question: What can I flush down my septic?

Answer:

Tampons OK

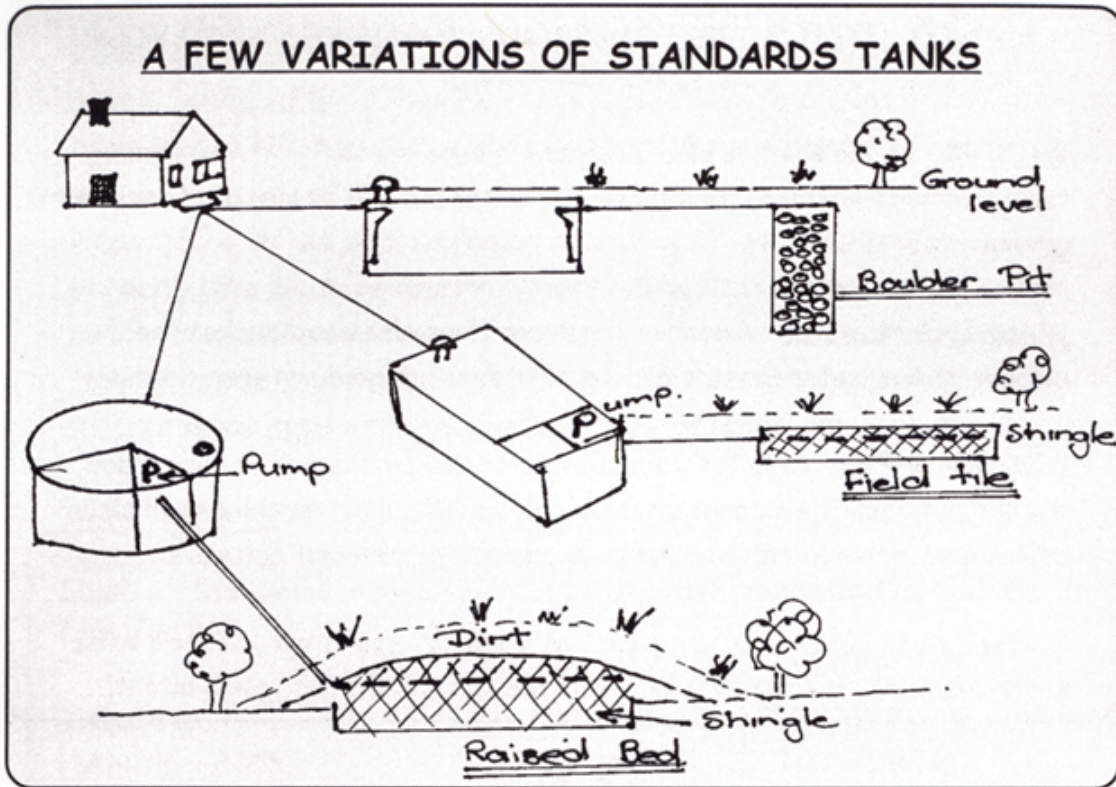
Condoms OK

Panty Liners OK

Sanitary Pads
Nappy Liners

NOT OK!
NOT OK! (inclined to block tanks prematurely)

A few Variations of Standard Tanks



There have been many types of septic tanks on the market over the years going from partition tanks to the single chamber then multi-chamber round and now the multi-chamber oblong.

It is important you know what sort of tank you have so that when your tanks needs cleaning you can either have the lids dug off or be able to tell your cleaner what type of tank it is so they know where to dig otherwise it could end up costing more.

As recommended by Councils and Emptying Operators, you should service you tank at least every 3 years. If you do not empty your tank regularly, you run the risk of blocking your water disposal system. Just remember every litre of water you use in your house, whether it be toilet, shower, bath, laundry, or kitchen use, it all goes into your septic and must go back into the ground some way. The average house uses approximately 3000litres every 4 days, this is a lot of water to get rid of.

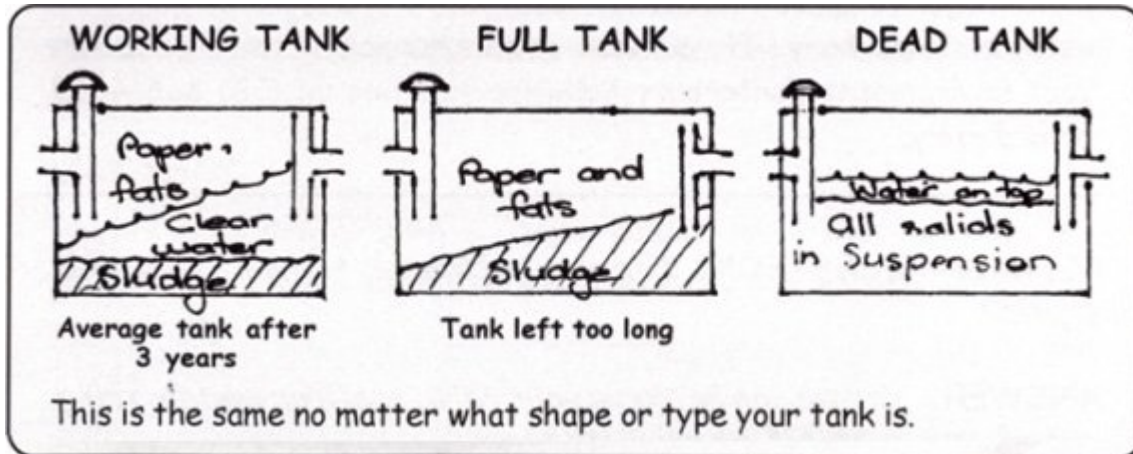
WATER DISPOSAL SYSTEMS

Boulder Holes: Older houses mostly had boulder holes which was just a deep hole filled with rocks. These are not favourable today because of water getting into underground aquifers.

FIELD TILES: A trench dug down approximately .5 to 1 metre filled with clean metals then pipe then more metal. This method is still favoured by councils today.

RAISED BEDS: Used in wet areas, basically a field tile put in about surrounding ground level.

TANKS WITH WATER TREATMENT: These come in all shapes and sizes but are basically a normal tank that collects the solids and then the water goes on to be treated through aeration and sometimes chemicals so water can be reused for plant irrigation.



This is the same no matter what shape of type of tank you have.

There are products on the market that claim to reduce cost by extending the time between emptying. This may be so but in most cases in my experience, it costs more for the product in the long run than emptying your septic on a regular basis.

YOUR TANK AND YOUR GARDEN

1. Tanks cannot be emptied through the mushroom as you will only take away water.
2. When your tank is emptied, the lids must be lifted to access the solids inside. This is why it is important to know what type of tank you have. An operator may have to dig up twice the area necessary to find the access hatch.
3. Do not put trees and shrubs over access hatches unless you want them dug up every 3 years.
4. Some trees and shrubs planted near tanks can cause root problems within the tank and in outlet drain lines. Willows are especially bad for this and will travel some distance to find liquid.

It is illegal to spread human effluent on to paddocks or into forestry in Canterbury. If you know of this happening you should contact Environment Canterbury Pollution Hot Line on 03 366 4663 immediately.

Common Question: Can you retrieve things from the septic?

Answer: Yes, we can retrieve you false teeth or wedding ring out of your septic if we know its there.

Common Problems

Tank Smells:

After emptying, you septic may smell slightly until the tank is full and a crust starts building up on top of the liquid.

Dead tanks or tanks with chemical contamination smell.

Tanks that need cleaning.

Your field tiles or disposal system is not working and water is not getting away.

If you tank is in a very sheltered area, sometimes smells seem to build up until the wind circulating clears it.

GIRGLING SOUNDS:

Gurgling sounds coming from you house means your gully traps are full which in turns means the water is not getting into your tank or away from it.

LOO SLOW:

If your loo is slow at getting away it means your water levels in your system are not right. This could be caused by blocked drains or a full septic.

If you have a septic tank and you think you have a blocked drain. It is better to ring your septic tank man than pay to have the drain cleared and then be told you need your tank emptying ending up with two bills instead of one!

We endeavour to always clear blocked drains.



Robson Environment Services



- Septic Tank Cleaning
- 4 x 4 Wash Down
- Spreading of Animal Effluent
- Retrieval of Factory Waste
- Solid Waste Spreading

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Remember:
*It may be poo to you,
but it's my bread and butter!*

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