

During the Flood

- Do not pump your septic tank during flooded or saturated drainfield conditions. Pumping it out could cause the tank to float out of the ground and may damage the inlet and outlet pipes. The best solution is to plug all drains in the basement and drastically reduce water use in the house.

After the Flood and floodwater has receded

- Do not drink well water until it is tested. Contact your local health department.
- Do not use the sewage system until water in the soil absorption field is lower than the water level around the house.
- Have your septic tank professionally inspected and serviced if you suspect damage. Signs of damage include settling or an inability to accept water. Most septic tanks are not damaged by flooding since they are below ground and completely covered. However, septic tanks and pump chambers can fill with silt and debris and must be professionally cleaned. If the soil absorption field is clogged with silt, a new system may have to be installed.
- Only trained specialists should clean or repair septic tanks because tanks may contain dangerous gases. Contact your health department or Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for a list of septic system contractors who work in your area.
- If sewage has backed up into the basement, clean the area and disinfect the floor. Use a chlorine solution of 120 ml of chlorine bleach to 3.8 litres of water to disinfect the area thoroughly.
- Pump the septic system as soon as possible after the flood (not during or if drainfield is saturate). Be sure to pump both the tank and lift station (if applicable). This will remove silt and debris that may have washed into the system.
- Do not compact the soil over the soil absorption field by driving or operating equipment in the area.
- Examine all electrical connections for damage before restoring electricity (if applicable).
- Be sure the septic tank's manhole cover is secure and that inspection ports have not been blocked or damaged.
- Check the vegetation over your septic tank and soil absorption field. Repair erosion damage and sod or reseed areas as necessary to provide turf grass cover.
- Aerobic sewage systems, upflow filters, trickling filters, and other media filters have a tendency to clog due to mud and sediment. These systems will need to be inspected and serviced to ensure they are in good working condition.