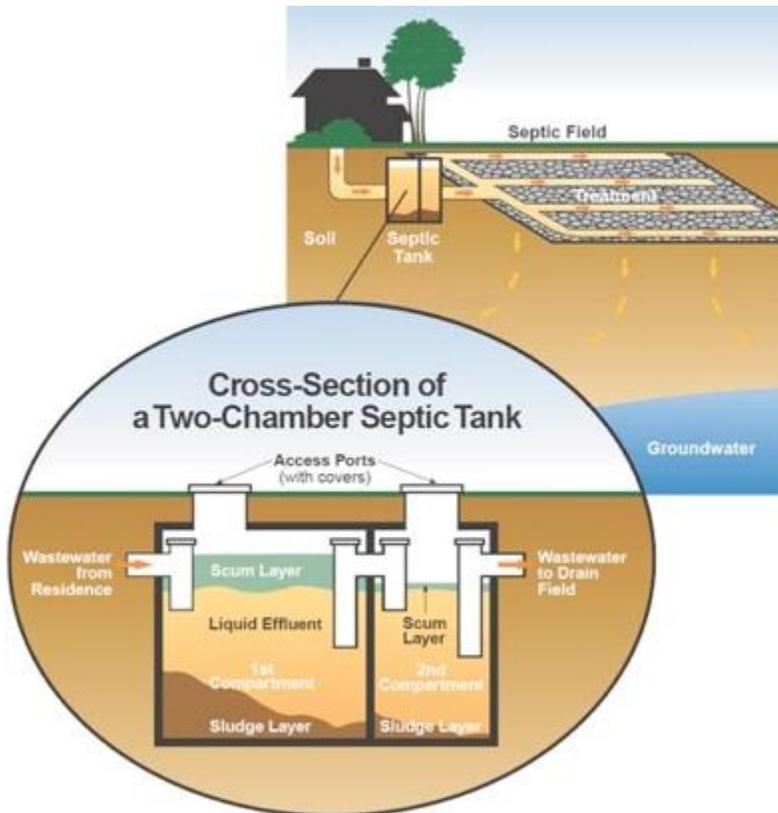




# TOWN OF KILLINGWORTH



## How to Properly Care for Your Septic System



Septic maintenance isn't complicated, and it doesn't need to be expensive. Upkeep comes down to four important elements:

- [Inspection & Pumping](#)
- [Water Efficiency](#)
- [Proper Waste Disposal](#)
- [Drainfield or Leachfield Care](#)

## Inspect and Pump Frequently

The average household septic system should be inspected at least every three years by a septic service professional. Household septic tanks are typically pumped every three to five years. Killingworth regulations require a minimum of pumping residential septic tanks every five years. Alternative systems that contain electrical float switches, pumps, or mechanical components need to be inspected more often, generally once a year. A service contract is recommended for these alternative systems since they have mechanical parts.

## Four major factors influence the frequency of septic pumping:

- Household size
- Total wastewater generated
- Volume of solids in wastewater
- Septic tank size

## Septic Pumper Coming? Here's What You Need to Know.

When you call a septic pumper, he or she will inspect for leaks and examine the scum and sludge layers in your septic tank.

Your septic tank includes a T-shaped outlet which prevents sludge and scum from leaving the tank and traveling to the leachfields. If the bottom of the scum layer is within six inches of the bottom of the outlet, or if the top of the sludge layer is within 12 inches of the outlet, your tank will need to be pumped.

These levels are recorded by the septic pumper and submitted to the Town of Killingworth Health Department on the mandated Pump-out Ticket. These tickets are kept on file in the Killingworth Health Department and a copy of the Pump-out Ticket should be provided to the homeowner by the septic pumper. These numbers help determine how often pumping is necessary.

The septic pumper should note the tank condition on the Pump-out ticket. If additional repairs are recommended, be sure to hire a licensed septic installer to make them as soon as possible.





## Avoid Common Culprits to System Failure

Pouring household and home improvement chemicals down your drains, flushing garbage down toilets, excessive water use, and failure to provide proper maintenance aren't the only culprits for septic system failure. Take note of these additional causes of septic failure:

### **Hot Tubs**

Hot tubs may be a great way to relax, but when it comes to emptying them, your septic system should be avoided. Emptying a hot tub into your septic system stirs the solids in the tank, pushing them into the leachfields, causing it to clog and fail. Drain cooled hot tub water onto turf or landscaped areas far away from your septic tank and leachfields, and in accordance with local regulations. Use the same caution when draining swimming pools.

### **Water Purification and Softening Systems**

Some freshwater purification systems, including water softeners, unnecessarily pump water into septic systems. Such systems can send hundreds of gallons of water to septic tanks, causing agitation of solids and excess flow to leachfields. Not only does this cause the septic system to prematurely fail but it is violated DEEP regulations. Water softener backwash must discharge into its own leaching field. Contact the Killingworth Health Department for more information regarding sizing and to schedule soil testing.

### **Garbage Disposals**

Consider eliminating or limiting the use of garbage disposals. While convenient, frequent use of garbage disposals significantly increases the accumulation of sludge and scum in septic tanks, resulting in the need for more frequent pumping.

### **Improper Design or Installation**

The proper design and installation of a septic system is essential for it to correctly function. A home's groundwater table, soil composition, and a properly leveled leachfield are just a few factors to ensure a well-functioning septic system.

---