

**HAMILTON COUNTY  
WATER & WASTEWATER TREATMENT AUTHORITY  
STEP SEWER SYSTEM  
PROPERTY OWNER/HOME OWNER  
USER INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES**

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**GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

1. A septic tank effluent pump (STEP) system is typically installed for residential and light commercial sewer service when conventional gravity or septic systems are impractical or too costly.
2. A STEP system primarily consists of a watertight septic tank, a turbine type effluent pump, a screened pump vault, and a pressurized piping system.
3. Wastewater enters the tank from the building using gravity flow. The tank is used for settling and digesting wastewater solids resulting in solid and liquid separation. The liquids are pumped into the line and conveyed to the wastewater treatment plant. The solids remain in the tank until the tank requires pumping by the Water & Wastewater Treatment Authority (WWTA). Depending on usage, solids typically need pumping every five to ten years.

**PROPERTY OWNER/HOME OWNER RESPONSIBILITY**

1. The Property Owner/Home Owner shall be responsible for understanding and abiding by the WWTA's Sewer Use Ordinance in its entirety.
2. The Property Owner/Home Owner shall be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the plumbing from the building to the septic tank. The discharge into the tank shall be typical sanitary (domestic) wastewater. Stormwater sources, such as roof or area drains and toxic discharges shall be strictly prohibited and such connection can result in fines. For definition of acceptable wastewater, please contact the WWTA.
3. The Property Owner/Home Owner shall be responsible for recording and furnishing an easement for STEP system components. Easement requirements shall be in accordance with the Standard Specifications for Septic Tank Effluent Pump (STEP) Systems.
4. The Property Owner/Home Owner shall be responsible for providing and maintaining constant access to the septic tank riser lid and pump control panel for the WWTA's maintenance purposes. The tank riser lid shall remain slightly above the ground. Yard decorations, i.e. birdbath or potted plants, that can be readily removed, may be placed on the riser lid.

5. The Property Owner/Home Owner shall prevent the tank and its components from being subject to traffic bearing loads.
6. The Property Owner/Home Owner shall provide power to the STEP system. A dedicated circuit to the control panel shall be provided and shall be the Property Owner/Home Owner's responsibility.
7. In the case of an alarm condition or temporary power outage, the tank (under normal operation) has the ability to store approximately 24 to 48 hours of wastewater. It is the Property Owner/Home Owner's responsibility to notify the WWTA when the alarm is activated. The Property Owner/Home Owner is also responsible for the minimizing water usage during alarm conditions until the WWTA responds to the Property Owner/Home Owner's notification. The WWTA is not responsible for any damages resulting from sewerage backup when water usage is not curtailed during an alarm condition. (Under alarm conditions, the Property Owner/Home Owner should not turn off the main breaker.)
8. The Property Owner/Home Owner shall be responsible for reading, understanding, and practicing the guidelines of STEP System usage as outlined therein.
9. The Property Owner/Home Owner shall be familiar with the location of the electrical control panel. Whenever the alarm comes on, call (423)-209-6409 to report the alarm condition. The audible alarm can be silenced by pushing the lighted button labeled "PUSH TO SILENCE" on the front of the control panel. Under normal usage the septic tank has 24 to 48 hours of storage capacity.

10. Users with questions concerning sewer billing shall call (423) 209-7842.

11. Prior to digging near the STEP system force main, septic tank or service line piping and appurtenances, the Property Owner/Home Owner shall locate all utilities. Failure to locate utilities may cause damage to existing utilities; as a result of failure to properly locate existing utilities shall be the expense of the Property Owner/Home Owner.
12. Property Owner/Home Owner is responsible for requesting proper identification from any WWTA work crewmember before admitting anyone into their building. Identification can be verified at WWTA by calling (423) 209-7842.
13. All legal matters, monthly sewer charges and assessment payments are the obligation and responsibility of the Property Owner/Home Owner of record. All correspondence will be directed to the Property Owner/Home Owner of record, and not any tenant users.
14. The Property Owner/Home Owner will own the septic tank, pump, pump controls, screened pump vault, piping and appurtenances.

## WWTA'S RESPONSIBILITY

1. The WWTA will be responsible for the operation and maintenance of the septic tank, pump, pump controls, screened pump vault, piping and appurtenance after the system has been inspected, approved, with a one year warranty, and all applicable documentation (i.e. easement) has been granted to the WWTA. The property owner will be responsible for any cost associated with repairs or installation of their system during the one year warranty period.
2. The WWTA will conduct routine STEP System inspection notifying the property Owner/Home Owner prior to the inspection. If system abuses are observed, the WWTA will ascertain the necessary corrections and notify the Property Owner/Home Owner in writing via certified mail. Continued system abuse may result in fines and penalties.

## USER GUIDELINES FOR STEP SYSTEMS

1. Practice good water conservation. This will reduce the quantity of water going into the system thereby extending the life of the system. Wash clothes and dishes only when a full load is obtained and avoid several loads in one day. Take short showers and don't let water run unnecessarily while washing hands, food, teeth, dishes, etc.

Repair leaky toilets, faucets or plumbing fixtures. Leaky toilets can waste up to 2000 gallons of water in one day; normal household usage ranges from 100 to 200 gallons per day. Use water-saving devices in the toilet tank, and don't flush unnecessarily.

2. Clean the lint filter on the washing machine at least as often as the manufacturer recommends.
3. Don't flush undesirable substances into the new sewer. Flushing flammable and toxic products is dangerous, while other materials such as paper towels, rags, newspaper, cigarettes, coffee grounds, egg shells, sanitary napkins, large amounts of hair and cooking grease are a maintenance nuisance and will also increase the frequency of pumping septic from the tank. Continuous abuse such as flushing of undesirable substances can or may result in fines.
4. Don't dump recreational vehicle (RV) waste into your septic tank. It will increase the amount of solids entering the septic tank and the frequency of required septic pumping. RV waste dumped directly into the screened vault will clog the pump and plug the screen. Some RV waste may contain chemicals that are toxic or that may adversely affect the biological activity in your tank.
5. The Property Owner/Home Owner should not excessively use the garbage disposal (i.e. disposal of large quantities of biodegradable). Abuse of garbage

disposals increase the amount of solids entering the tank and can cause clogging. Items such as eggshells, coffee grounds, tea bags, and etc. are not biodegradable. Depending on the circumstance, damage resulting from abuse of the garbage disposal can or may result in fines.

6. The Property Owner/Home Owner should not pour grease into drains or toilets. Disposing of grease into the system will cause clogs. Depending on the circumstances, damage resulting from improper disposal of grease can result in costly repair and can be charged to the Property Owner/Home Owner.
7. Don't use special additives that claim they will enhance the performance of your tank. Most additives do not improve the performance of the septic tank and can cause major damage to the collection system. The natural microorganisms that grow in the septic tank are sufficient. These organisms generate their own enzymes for breaking down and digesting nutrients.
8. Report any vandalism of STEP system to the WWTA immediately. Repairs necessitated by abuse or deliberate misuse will be charged to the Property Owner/Home Owner.
9. Don't enter the septic tank. Any work to the tank should be done by the WWTA. Gases that can be generated in the tank and/or the lack of oxygen can be fatal.
10. Don't use concentrated chlorine tablets or other chlorine products in the toilet. Chlorine damages to rubber seals and gaskets, and may damage other parts of the toilet, causing leaks, running up the water bill and overloading the STEP system.
11. Don't flush floor wax or rug cleaner into the tank. These products will interfere with the normal operation of the septic tank.
12. Don't flush pool or spa products into the system, and limit the use of bath and body oils, as they can overload the system's digestion capacity.
13. Do not box in the control panel.
14. Do not unplug the alarm.
15. Do not use large quantities of cleaning products which will sterilize the tanks.

## SUBSTITUTES FOR HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTES

The following hazardous products can be replaced with products that are less environmentally harmful. The hazardous cleaners are listed below and are followed by the suggested substitute.

1. **AMMONIA-BASED CLEANERS:** Sprinkle Baking Soda on a damp sponge. For windows, use a solution of 2 Tbs. White Vinegar to 1 qt. Water. Place the mixture into the spray bottle.
2. **DISINFECTANTS:** Use as Borax or like product:  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup in a gallon of water: deodorizes also.
3. **DRAIN DECLOGGERS:** Use a Plunger or Metal Snake, or remove and clean trap.
4. **SCOURING CLEANERS AND POWERS:** Sprinkle Baking Soda on a damp sponge or add 4 Tbs. Baking Soda to 1 qt. Warm water or use Bon Ami. It's cheaper and won't scratch.
5. **CARPET/upholstery cleaners:** Sprinkle Dry Cornstarch or Baking Soda on, and then vacuum. For tougher stains, blot with White Vinegar in soapy water.
6. **TOILET CLEANERS:** Sprinkle on Baking Soda or Bon Ami, then scrub with a toilet brush.
7. **FURNITURE/FLOOR POLISHES:** To clean, use Oil Soap and warm water. Dry with soft cloth. Polish with 1 part Lemon Juice to 2 parts Oil (any kind), or use natural products with Lemon Oil or Beeswax in Mineral Oil.
8. **METAL CLEANERS:** Brass and copper: scrub with a used half of Lemon dipped in Salt. Stainless steel: use Scouring Pad and Soapy Water. Silver: rub gently with Toothpaste and soft wet cloth.
9. **OVEN CLEANERS:** Quickly sprinkle Salt on drips, then scrub. Use Baking Soda and Scouring Pads on older spills.
10. **LAUNDRY DETERGENT:** Choose one with zero phosphate content or use Soap Flakes with 1/3 cup of Washing Soda. (Before switching, wash clothes in pure washing sod to remove detergent residues.

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I, the Property Owner/Home Owner have read, understand, and hereby agree to follow the guidelines as set forth in this Property Owner/Home Owner/User Information and Guidelines Document. I understand that the WWTA shall own, operate and maintain the STEP system as described hereinbefore and that I shall not attempt to make any repairs to the STEP system. I understand that, depending on the circumstances, I can be held responsible for and be required to pay for the repair of any damage to the STEP System as a result of abuse or negligence on my part.

Name of Property Owner / Home Owner:

Service Address:

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
By: \_\_\_\_\_