Septic System Care Begins With You

Regular maintenance and safety measures help keep septic systems safe and environmentally friendly. Follow the safety guidelines below — and see the Health Department page at www.tpchd.org/septic for more information about the Septic System Program and you can stay involved in keeping your system running safely and properly:

- **Know where your septic system is located** — If you’re unsure of where your septic system and drain field are, contact the Health Department at (253) 798-6577 or log on at www.tpchd.org/asbuilt.php to locate your property’s record drawing. Knowing this information is important because you can avoid:
  - Children and pets from playing around the septic tank lid(s).
  - Construction of structures over the drain field.
  - Cars and heavy equipment parked on your drain field.

- **Walk your property routinely to observe potential safety or health risks, and take steps to address them** — Check the drain field and down slope areas for broken equipment, holes, odors, wet spots or surfacing sewage. Exposure to bacteria can cause a health risk to people, pets and the environment.

- **Make sure your septic tank lid(s) properly cover the opening and are secure and durable** — Check for damages and cracks. Prevent injuries and falls into the tank.

- **Instruct children not to play around septic tank lids or in the drain field** — Kids are naturally curious and love to explore outdoors. But playing around the septic tank or trying to open the lid can be dangerous. Kids or pets can be seriously injured from falls into or around the tank, and exposure to bacteria can cause health risks.

- **Have your system inspected regularly by a septic service professional certified by Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department** — The inspection will ensure proper system operation and let you know if pumping is needed. A list of certified septic service professionals can be found at www.tpchd.org/septicservicecompanies. Inspections can:
  - Protect ground, surface and drinking water from contamination.
  - Prevent bacterial pollution from entering Puget Sound directly or through storm water run-off into creeks and streams.
  - Keep shellfish harvested from public waters safe to eat.