

What To Do In The Meantime

1 Avoid Contact with Wastewater or Sewage

Wastewater and sewage contain various bacteria and pathogens that can be harmful to your health. **This includes greywater from laundry or showers.** If wastewater is coming to the surface, consider blocking off the area to avoid contact.

2 Do Not Attempt to Repair the System Yourself

In Island County, most septic repairs must be done by a licensed professional and may require a permit. In addition to exposure to pathogens, working near open septic tanks poses serious safety hazards, including **entrapment and even death.**

3 Limit Water Use

Reduce your water usage at home. Shower at a friend's house, a neighbor's place, or at the gym. Consider using a laundromat instead of washing clothes at home. **Excess water may worsen the problem.**

Other Methods for Sewage Disposal

To reduce strain on the system and limit potential for exposure, consider entering into a short-term contract to have your tank pumped regularly until your system is repaired. Portable toilets are also a temporary solution for managing failed systems. Scan the QR code below to find septic pumping and portable toilet services in Island County.

Scan to find
licensed
professionals
that work in
Island County!



Or use the URL -
www.islandcountywa.gov/678/Hiring-a-Professional-Industry-Contact

Financial Assistance Is Available

You are not on your own when it comes to repairing or replacing your septic system. Island County Public Health has partnered with Craft3! They are a nonprofit, non-bank, community development financial institution. You could get a Clean Water Loan or a no-deposit grant to help repair or replace your failed system. And you don't need perfect credit! Please visit the Craft3 Clean Water Loans website for more details.

www.craft3.org

Contact Us

Have questions about on-site sewage?
Need to file an environmental health complaint?

Visit:

Island County Public Health
On-site Sewage
Operations and Maintenance



(360) 679-7318



OperationsAndMaintenance@IslandCountyWA.gov



Island County Public Health
1 NE 6th Street
Coupeville, WA. 98239
(360) 679-7350



Scan the QR
Code for our
website.



SCAN HERE

www.islandcountywa.gov/190/Onsite-Sewage-Septic-Systems



Septic System Failures

- ▶▶ How to spot a failure
- ▶▶ Repair process
- ▶▶ Best practices

Environmental Health
Island County Public Health



Septic System Longevity

The average lifespan of a septic system is approximately 30 years, but it can last longer with proper care and maintenance. Failures can occur for various reasons, often due to improper use or aging.

How Septic Systems Fail

A septic system can fail for several reasons, including:

- Cracked or leaking tank.
- Clogs in the drain field caused by fats, oils, grease, or solids like trash.
- Crushed septic components.
- Excessive water usage in the home.
- Root infiltration.
- Age.

How To Spot A Failure

Signs that a septic system may be failing include:

- Bright green, spongy grass on the drain field, especially during dry weather.
- Pooling water or muddy soil.
- Strong odor.
- Slow draining fixtures.
- Gurgling sounds in the plumbing system.
- Wastewater backing up into household drains.
- Recurring alarm.

First Steps If You Discover Failure Or Distress

1 Review Your Processes

Examine processes within your home.

Are there any leaky fixtures? Have you been using large volumes of water? Have you allowed food particles, fats, oils, or grease to go down the drain?

Examine the system. Is your tank filter clogged?

2 Make Adjustments

Repair leaky fixtures, distribute water usage, be cautious about what enters your drains, refrain from parking over septic components, and **schedule a septic inspection.**

3 Schedule a Full System Inspection

Contact a licensed septic maintenance service provider (MSP) to evaluate your system. Ensure that they are licensed to operate in Island County. For a list of licensed MSPs in Island County, please refer to the link or QR code below.

Scan the QR code with your cell phone's camera to find licensed professionals that work in Island County.



Or use the URL - www.islandcountywa.gov/678/Hiring-a-Professional---Industry-Contact

Septic System Repair Steps

If your septic system has failed and will need to be repaired, here are the steps:

Step 1: Contact a **Septic Designer** licensed by Washington State. They will assess what type of system is right for you and will submit a design permit with the County.

Step 2: Contact a **Septic Installer** licensed in Island County to perform the installation.

Step 3: Pass your **final inspection.**

