

## What is a Septic System & How Does It Work

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A septic system contains a septic tank and a drainfield. *Blackwater* is toilet waste. *Graywater* is waste from the kitchen sink, bath tub/shower, and washing machine. All go into your septic system.

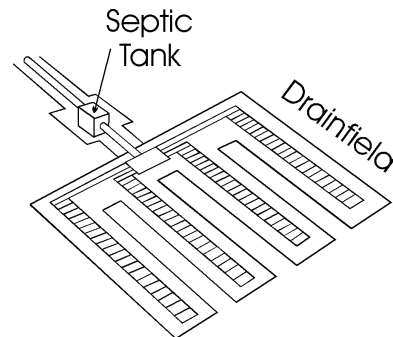


Figure 1 - Septic System Parts

### Septic Tank

- ▶ Made of concrete, steel, or fiberglass and is located underground.
- ▶ All wastewater from your house first goes into the septic tank.
- ▶ Solids settle to the bottom of the tank where bacteria feed on them and break them down.
- ▶ Liquid from the septic tank flows to a distribution box. This directs flow to the drainfield.

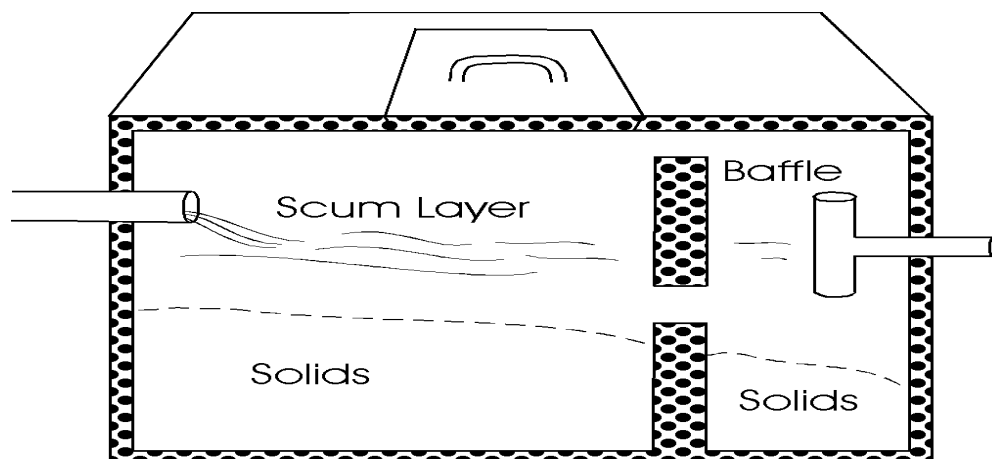
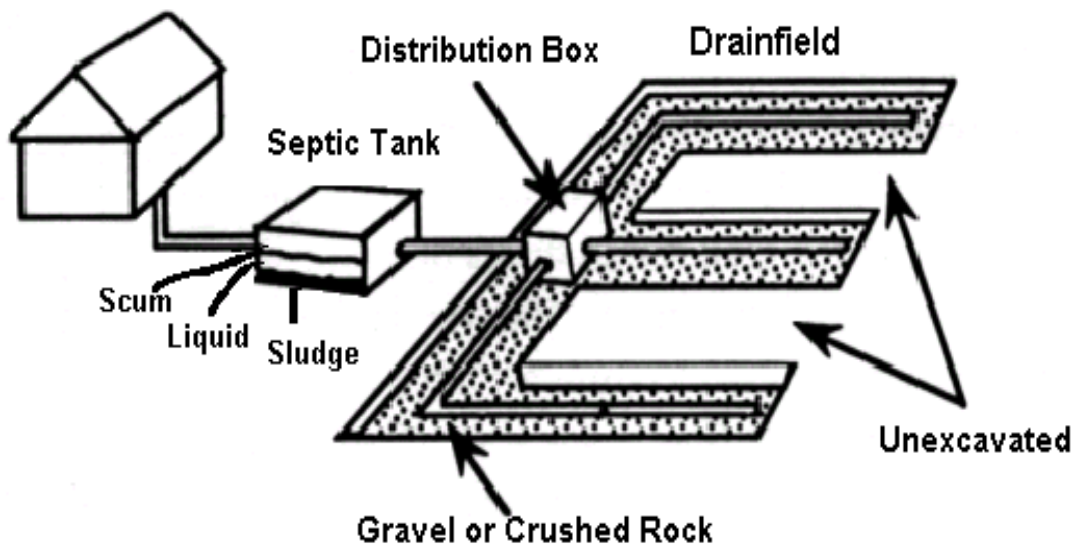


Figure 2 - Septic Tank

## Drainfield

- ▶ Consists of underground pipes in shallow beds of gravel or soil.
- ▶ Wastewater from the septic tank flows from distribution box into these pipes. The pipes have small holes so the water runs out slowly.
- ▶ The waste is stored in the gravel or soil until it can seep into the soil below and beside the beds.
- ▶ The gravel and soil filter more waste from the water and reduce pathogens (harmful bacteria).



**Figure 3 - Conventional Septic System**

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