

## Fact Sheet

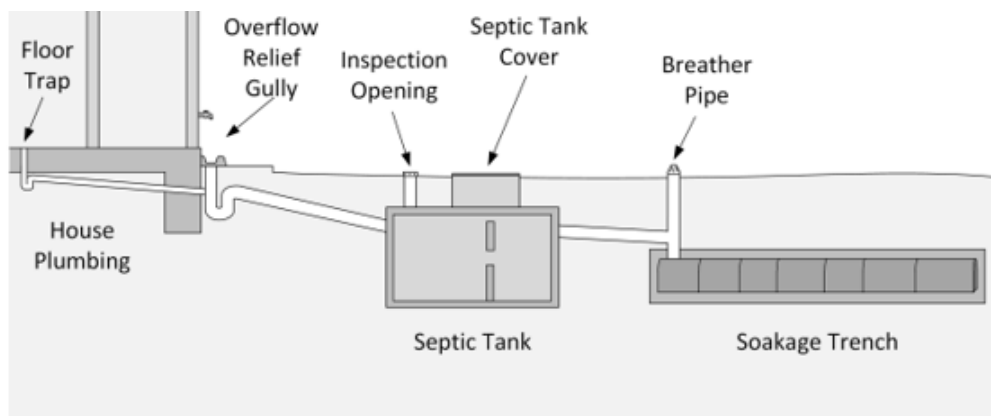
# Flooding and your on-site wastewater system

Do you have an on-site wastewater system (this might be a septic tank with soakage trenches, or an aerated treatment system with irrigation)? What impact might a flood event have on your system and what should you do?

## Flood imminent

Be prepared that your wastewater system is unlikely to work if it is flooded.

- > Limit water use as much as possible
  - > Avoid baths and consider short showers instead.
  - > Postpone or spread out laundry loads where possible.
- > Make sure your overflow relief gully is clear from debris/objects.
  - > This allows flood water that enters your system to overflow to the outside of your house.
- > DON'T have your septic tank or aerated treatment tank pumped out.
  - > The licenced contractor would need to re-fill your tank with clean water to avoid it from popping out of the ground, so you won't be creating any more space.



## During flooding

- > Avoid contact with flood waters.
  - > Wastewater from your septic or aerated treatment tank may back-up into your household or around your property. This water will contain organisms that can cause illness.
- > If your system is under flood water, there is an increased risk of:
  - > Less space in your septic tank.
  - > Poor treatment of wastewater.
  - > Solids wash-through, causing problem with components such as pumps, irrigation lines and soakage trenches.
  - > Blocked drains and system damage (e.g., burst pipes).

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## After flooding

- > If your wastewater tank has been under flood water, don't use fixtures that are connected to it until all components have been inspected and repaired.
- > Have your system professionally inspected and serviced once the ground is no longer soaked.
- > Your tank may need to be pumped out by a licenced contractor, and cleaned to remove excess silt.
- > DON'T pump out the tank yourself. This is illegal and can cause it to pop out of the ground under the right conditions (e.g., if the ground is still saturated, or if the tank was recently installed and the soil around it hasn't yet compacted).
  - > Damage to components, such as the inlet and outlet, can also occur
- > A professional agent can best advise when your wastewater system is ready for use again.
  - > Take care around irrigated water from an aerated treatment system, as treatment may be compromised until the system is re-established



## Cleaning up

- > See the [Cleaning up a domestic wastewater overflow](#) fact sheet for further information.

## For more information

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