

# House Keys



**Helping you unlock doors in today's Real Estate market**

## How Well Do You Know Your Septic System? Important Info to Help Prevent Costly Mistakes

I have sold many houses to people who've never owned a home with a septic system and they are never told or shown how to maintain one properly. I thought it was important to devote an article to their care and maintenance. Your actions dictate your septic systems longevity as well as the need for costly repairs.

For those of you who have never had one, a septic system consists of two components; a septic tank and a drain field. Primary treatment occurs in the septic tank where bacteria digest organic materials in the wastewater. The water then flows into the drain field for secondary treatment. Here, bacteria complete the digestion process as the wastewater slowly infiltrates into the soil. After conferring with Pat Tatum, with the Glenn Tatum Septic Systems, and through my own personal experience, I have compiled a list of do's and don'ts to help you keep your system running efficiently and to give you many years of service.

- Use only Scotts Toilet Tissue that is safe for septic systems. (Statement is on the packaging.) They make a softer kind but it's not friendly to septic systems.
- Never throw tissues into your system.
- No feminine products should ever be flushed!
- Keep trees away from your system. The roots can destroy it!
- Never drain oils of any kind down your drain. Use glass jars to empty your cooking oil or salad oils and dispose jar with your weekly trash.
- Don't rinse your paint brushes in your sink. Paint should never go into your system.
- Don't use your garbage disposal. A house with a septic system should not be using this.
- Avoid antibacterial soaps and detergents. This will kill the friendly bacteria you need.
- Try to space washing clothes through out the week or install a separate system for your washing machine. I have purchased a front loader that uses 50% less water and detergents. Not only does it clean my clothes very well but I am helping my system to last longer!
- Use only liquid laundry soap. Never use powders of any kind.
- Don't use Draino or any of those kinds of drain cleaners!
- Avoid bleach! Another liquid that will kill the friendly bacteria!
- Don't ever flush your old medications down the drain where they can kill bacteria.

About 95% of the sludge and scum in your septic is broken down by bacteria. The other 5% remains in the tank and builds up in the sludge layer. Consequently, your septic tank must be pumped on a regular basis. Otherwise, solids would eventually fill the tank and wash out into the drain field. This is detrimental to the overall health and longevity of your system. If this happens, it could prematurely clog the soil pores. Pumping out the septic tank at that point will not restore your system. You should have the system pumped out on an annual basis.

Watch for the water flow coming from your roof during a storm. I have a tile roof so my house cannot have gutters. We had water running over our drain field during all of the storms. We installed a rock garden at the front of our home so that the water was no longer dumping heavily into our system

For the people who would like a product that you can put down your drain that will help keep it clean Pat Tatum recommends SEPTIC 2000. This product is also good for ridding your drains of hair and oil. You don't have to use it on a regular basis but if you are concerned about oil and hair this would be wonderful, you can purchase this product from the Tatum Septic Company. If this is something you are interested in just call them at: 407-947-0478 If you do these things your system will benefit greatly! Call me if you have any questions about your septic system. I would be happy to get the answers you need! —Anne-Marie



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## Mold...It's not just gross, it can be dangerous

Molds can be found almost anywhere, particularly in humid climates like Florida. They grow on paper, wood, carpet, foods, drywall, and insulation. Indoor molds found in schools, commercial buildings, and homes are a potential health concern. There are over two hundred different varieties and experts are still counting.

Many symptoms and human effects attributed to inhalation of mycotoxins (byproduct of mold), have been reported including mucous membrane irritation, skin rashes, athlete's foot, nausea, immune system suppression, acute or chronic liver and lung damage, acute or chronic central nervous system damage, endocrine effects and cancer. Certain molds can even grow in the lungs if inhaled.

### Prevention:

The key to mold control is moisture control. Don't wait! Remediation and testing are expensive.

1. Fix leaky plumbing.
2. Watch for condensation or wet spots. Fix source as soon as possible.
3. Prevent moisture due to condensation by increasing surface temperature or reducing the moisture level in the air (humidity) to increase surface temperature, insulate, or increase air circulation. To reduce moisture level in air, repair leaks, increase ventilation (if outside air is cold or dry), or dehumidify (if outdoor air is warm and humid)
4. Keep heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) drip pans clean, flowing properly and unobstructed.
5. Vent moisture generating appliances, such as dryers, to the outside where possible.
6. Maintain low indoor humidity, below 60% relative humidity (RH), ideally 20-50%, if possible.
7. Perform regular building/HVAC inspections and maintenance as scheduled.
8. Clean and dry wet or damp spots within 48 hours
9. Don't let foundations stay wet. Provide drainage and slope the ground away from the foundation.
10. Paint and caulk exterior of building at least every 5 years (elastic based paints have a longer life).
11. Talk with licensed HVAC contractor about moving A/C filter from the base of the air handler to the intake area. Use pleated type filters.