



Un-sewered domestic sewage

The Stour catchment is a rural area with many properties that are not connected to the main sewage network. Septic tanks and small sewage treatment plants are often used where there is no connection to the main sewage network. They operate by partially treating the waste water. Septic tanks and treatment plants are required to have an infiltration system (secondary drainage field or soak-away system). Small treatment plants can provide better treatment of the effluent in comparison with septic tanks, which provide a basic level of treatment. Badly installed and poorly maintained systems can pollute local water supplies and water courses.



There are controls to prevent pollution to groundwater and surface water (lakes, rivers and streams) from small sewage discharges. These were updated in January 2015; there is guidance on what you need to do if you have a septic tank or sewage treatment plant, or if you are planning to install one, please visit: www.gov.uk/permits-you-need-for-septic-tanks.

Looking After Your Septic Tank

Septic tanks and small treatment plants work thanks to naturally occurring bacteria which thrive on the waste water, looking after your septic tank can help prevent pollution.

If you dispose of certain substances and materials down the toilet, or down sinks, you risk either blocking a drain or upsetting the natural balance within the septic tank. This will stop it working properly and could lead to serious problems of pollution or choking of the soak-away disposal system.

Recommended do's and don'ts to keep your septic tank healthy

Do:

- Use toilet fresheners, mild detergents, fabric conditioners and washing powders and liquids in moderation without upsetting the natural balance of the septic tank.
- Use bleach and disinfectants but please use them sparingly as they can kill friendly bacteria which make the septic tank work.

Don't:

- Flush rags, disposable nappies, kitchen towels, sanitary items, cotton buds etc down the toilet. Please remember to bag it and bin it - don't flush it.
- Dispose of grease, oil, fat or chemical toilet liquid into drains leading to the septic tank.
- Wash paint brushes in the sink or put brush cleaning liquids into the drains leading to the septic tank.
- Connect rainwater drainage pipes, for example, from roofs or drains leading to the septic tank.
- Dispose of waste liquids that are harmful to septic tanks into rainwater drains.