

HOMEOWNER'S MANUAL

For Wastewater Customers of South Alabama Utilities

How to Take Care of Your Wastewater System

Congratulations! Your home is on an Orenco® Effluent Sewer that's maintained by the experts at South Alabama Utilities.

That means, you have a watertight underground tank in your yard that stores and filters household wastewater, before the filtered effluent is pumped out for additional treatment. It's a highly engineered system that uses very little electricity and protects the environment.

Your system will work better and last longer if you learn what can go into it – and what can not. As a general rule, nothing

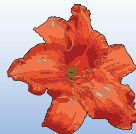
should go down the drain that hasn't first been ingested, other than toilet paper, mild detergents, and wash water. (In fact, this is true for all sewer systems.)

This booklet explains the do's and don'ts of your wastewater system. **Do** read this booklet. **Do** explain this information to your family and guests. **Do** call South Alabama Utilities if you have any questions. **Don't** get stuck with a bill for additional tank maintenance or repair because your family or your guests have ignored these guidelines. With proper care, your underground tank and pumping system will last for decades!

Emergency Phone Number: (251) 649-4316

SouthAlabamaUtilities

Office and Emergency Phone Number:
(251) 649-4316
P.O. Box 319
4800 McCrary Road
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Orenco Systems® Inc.

Changing the Way the World Does Wastewater®

www.orenco.com

Do's and Don'ts for INSIDE the House



Don't flush dangerous and damaging substances into your wastewater treatment system. (Please refer to the "Substitutes for Household Hazardous Waste," on the next page.) Specifically, do not flush . . .

- Pharmaceuticals
- Excessive amounts of bath or body oils
- Water softener backwash
- Flammable or toxic products
- Household cleaners, especially floor wax and rug cleaners
- Chlorine bleach, chlorides, and pool or spa products
- Pesticides, herbicides, agricultural chemicals, or fertilizers



Don't use special additives that are touted to enhance the performance of your tank or system. Additives can cause major damage to other areas in the collection system. The natural microorganisms that grow in your system generate their own enzymes that are sufficient for breaking down and digesting nutrients in the wastewater.



Do use your trash can to dispose of substances that cause maintenance problems and/or increase the need for septage pumping. Dispose of the following with your trash:

- Egg shells, cantaloupe seeds, gum, coffee grounds, tea bags, chewing tobacco, cigarette butts
- Paper towels, newspapers, sanitary napkins, diapers, kitty litter, candy wrappers
- Cooking grease
- Rags, large amounts of hair



Do collect grease in a container and dispose with your trash. And avoid using garbage disposals excessively. Compost scraps or dispose with your trash, also. Food byproducts accelerate the need for septage pumping and increase maintenance.

Don't leave interior faucets on to protect water lines during cold spells. A running faucet can easily increase your wastewater flow by 1,000 to 3,000 gallons per day and hydraulically overload your system. Instead, properly insulate or heat your faucets and plumbing.



Don't use excessive amounts of water. Using 50 gallons per person per day is typical. If your household does not practice any of the "water conserving tips" below, you may be using too much water.



Do conserve water:

- Take shorter showers or baths with a partially filled tub. Be cautious about excessive use of large soaking tubs.
- Don't let water run unnecessarily while brushing teeth or washing hands, food, dishes, etc.
- Wash dishes and clothes when you have a full load.
- When possible, avoid doing several loads in one day.
- Use water saving devices on faucets and showerheads.
- When replacing old toilets, buy low-flush models.

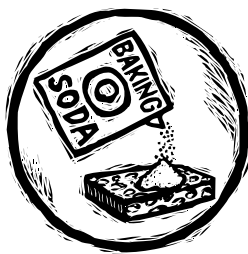
Do's and Don'ts for INSIDE the House



Don't ignore leaky plumbing fixtures; repair them. A leaky toilet can waste up to 2,000 gallons of water in a single day. That's 10-20 times more water than a household's typical daily usage. Leaky plumbing fixtures increase your water bill, waste natural resources, and overload your system.



Do keep lint out of your wastewater treatment system by cleaning the lint filters on your washing machine and dryer before every load. Installing a supplemental lint filter on your washing machine would be a good precautionary measure. (This normally takes just a few minutes. Lint and other such materials can make an extreme difference in the frequency and cost of pumping out your primary treatment tank.)



Do use substitutes for household hazardous waste. Replace the following hazardous products with products that are less environmentally harmful. The hazardous cleaners are listed below, followed by the suggested substitute.

Ammonia-based cleaners:

Sprinkle baking soda on a damp sponge. For windows, use a solution of 2 tbs. white vinegar to 1 qt. water. Place the mixture into a spray bottle.

Disinfectants:

Use Borax: 1/2 cup in a gallon of water; deodorizes also.

Drain decloggers:

Use a plunger or metal snake, or remove and clean trap.

Scouring cleaners & powders:

Sprinkle baking soda on a damp sponge or add 4 tbs. baking soda to 1 qt. warm water. Or use Bon Ami; it's cheaper and won't scratch.

Carpet/upholstery cleaners:

Sprinkle dry cornstarch or baking soda on, then vacuum. For tougher stains, blot with white vinegar in soapy water.

Toilet cleaners:

Sprinkle on baking soda or Bon Ami, then scrub with a toilet brush.

Furniture/floor polishes:

To clean, use oil soap and warm water. Dry with soft cloth. Polish with 1 part lemon juice and 2 parts oil (any kind), or use natural products with lemon oil or beeswax in mineral oil.

Metal cleaners:

- Brass and copper: scrub with a used half of lemon dipped in salt.
- Stainless steel: use scouring pad and soapy water.
- Silver: rub gently with toothpaste and soft wet cloth.

Oven cleaners:

Quickly sprinkle salt on drips; then scrub. Use baking soda and scouring pads on older spills.



Laundry detergents:

Choose a liquid detergent (not a powder) that doesn't have chlorine or phosphates.

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Do's and Don'ts for OUTSIDE the House



Don't dig without knowing the location of your wastewater system. As much as possible, plan landscaping and permanent outdoor structures before installation. But easily removable items, such as bird baths and picnic tables, are OK to place on top of your system.



Don't drive over your tank or any buried components in your system, unless it's been equipped with a special traffic lid. If the system is subject to possible traffic, put up a barricade or a row of shrubs.



Don't dump RV waste into your wastewater system. It will increase the frequency of required septage pumping. When dumped directly into the pumping vault, RV waste clogs or fouls equipment, causing undue maintenance and repair costs. (Also, some RV waste may contain chemicals that are toxic or that may retard the biological digestion occurring within the tank.)

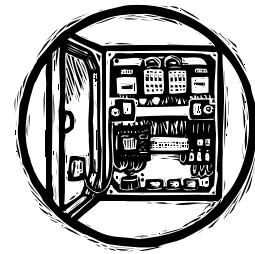
Don't ever connect rain gutters or storm drains to the sewer or allow surface water to drain into it. And don't discharge hot tub water into your system. The additional water will increase costs and reduce the capacity of the systems. It can also wash excess solids through the tank.

Do keep the tank access lid secure to the riser at all times. If bolts are lost or damaged, call South Alabama Utilities immediately for replacement: 251-649-4316.



Don't enter your tank, ever! Gases that can be generated in the tank and/or oxygen depletion can be fatal.

At the Control Panel

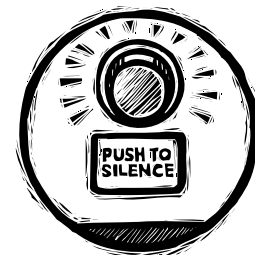


Do locate your electrical control panel where it will be protected from potential vandalism and have unobstructed access.

Do familiarize yourself with the location of your wastewater system and electrical control panel. Refer to the panel's model number when reporting a malfunction in the system.

Important! Caution!
Only a qualified electrician or authorized installer/operator should work on your control panel.

Do take immediate action to correct the problem in the event of an alarm condition. Call South Alabama Utilities immediately whenever an alarm comes on. (It sounds like a smoke alarm.) Service is available 24 hours a day.

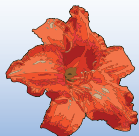


Do remember that the audible alarm can be silenced by pushing the lighted button located directly above the "Push to Silence" label on the front of the electrical control panel. With normal use, the tank has a reserve storage capacity good for about 24 hours.

Don't turn off the main circuit breaker to the wastewater pumps when going on vacation. If there is any infiltration or inflow into the system, the pumps will need to handle it.

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