

# Montair Homeowner Wastewater System Information

## How it works

Montair HOA wastewater systems are “engineered” systems requiring pumping of liquids. After passing from the home, the wastewater collects in the septic tank. In the tank, oil and grease float to the top of the tank as scum and solid waste sinks to the bottom as sludge. The partially treated wastewater, or effluent, is mostly clear. The solids at the bottom are subject to a host of bacteria and other microorganisms that begin breaking down the materials in an anaerobic (without oxygen) process.

To dispose of the liquid a pump is installed in the tank. A float switch is used to determine when pumping is needed. When activated the pump moves wastewater into the Montair wastewater system. Effluent is pumped via a pipeline (about ¾ of a mile) to ponds south of the subdivision where it evaporates. The ponds are about 30 feet higher than the subdivision so the system is under constant pressure.

Over time, the sludge at the bottom and scum at the top build up thick layers. To keep the system working properly, the solids and grease must be pumped out during regular maintenance of the system.

Your septic system is not a trash can. An easy rule of thumb is not to flush anything besides human waste and toilet paper. Never flush:

- Cooking grease or oil
- Non-flushable wipes, such as baby wipes or other wet wipes
- Photographic solutions
- Feminine hygiene products
- Condoms
- Dental floss
- Diapers
- Cigarette butts
- Coffee grounds
- Cat litter
- Paper towels
- Pharmaceuticals
- Household chemicals like gasoline, oil, pesticides, antifreeze, and paint or paint thinners

Your septic system contains a collection of living organisms that digest and treat household waste. Pouring toxins down your drain can kill these organisms and harm your septic system. Whether you are at the kitchen sink, bathtub, or utility sink:

- Avoid chemical drain openers for a clogged drain. Instead, use boiling water or a drain snake.
- Never pour cooking oil or grease down the drain.
- Never pour oil-based paints, solvents, or large volumes of toxic cleaners down the drain. Even latex paint waste should be minimized.
- Eliminate or limit the use of a garbage disposal. This will significantly reduce the amount of fats, grease, and solids that enter your septic tank..

Conserving the amount of liquid flowing into the system is helpful when evaporation rates are low in the winter and rains are adding to the pond levels. Water conservation also reduces your well pumping costs. Most modern homes have low flow devices for showers and toilets, but you should check these. New appliances such as dish and clothes washers are more water efficient. Consider replacing old appliances. Some simple water conservation methods are:

- Install low flow showers heads
- Avoid using bathtubs
- Repair leaking toilets and faucets
- Do laundry with full loads
- Take short showers
- Use a dishwasher instead of hand washing

## High Water Alarms

The septic tank is equipped with a high water alarm. The purpose of this alarm is to warn the homeowner when the liquid level in the tank is too high. These are typically mounted on the wall of the home near the tank. Should the liquid level continue to rise it will back up into the home or leak out of the covers into the yard. The alarm can be reset by pressing the button on the control box. If it sounds again, call for service immediately and avoid adding to the tank.

## Homeowner Maintenance and Responsibilities

The homeowner must maintain the area around the tank covers so the system can be inspected and maintained. To prevent damage to the tank homeowners must not drive vehicles or garden equipment over the tank. The homeowner is responsible for maintaining access for the annual HOA inspection and providing a freshwater hose that will reach the tank cover. Homeowners are responsible for keeping the sewer valve cover clear. The circuit breaker controlling the septic system pump should be clearly marked in the breaker panel.

The septic tank is connected to the wastewater system in the valve box via a PVC pipe. If this pipe is damaged a serious leak will occur. It is the homeowner's responsibility to ensure this pipe is not damaged by trenching or other excavation on the property.

Only sewer waste should be entering the septic system. Adding rain water, run off, or sump pump discharge is prohibited as this can greatly increase the flow of effluent into the system.

## Montair HOA Annual Inspections and Pumping

Montair HOA will make an annual inspection of the wastewater system (typically in the spring). These inspections include testing of the alarm system, pump, piping (leaving the tank), level of solids in the tank, and cleaning the screen around the pump. Any maintenance indicated by the inspection will be performed after the inspection.

Montair HOA will pump the solids from the tank when the level nears the top of the tank (based on the inspection results). Pumping is generally scheduled in June and takes place over 2 days. Homeowners will be notified if their tank is scheduled to be pumped.

### Homeowner Checklist

- Septic tank covers are clear and accessible
- Septic tank covers are undamaged and sealed
- Valve box cover is clearly visible
- Septic pump circuit breaker is clearly labeled.