

## What to look for when hiring a wastewater practitioner:

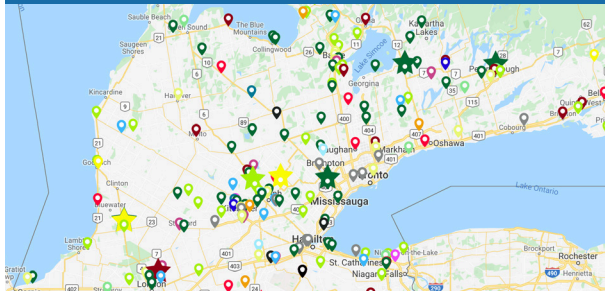
Make sure that only an OOWA professional designs, installs, pumps or services your onsite sewage system.

- Are they an OOWA Member?\*
- Do they have their BCIN (Building Code Identification Number)?
- Are they qualified and registered with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing?
- Are they going to get a permit?
- Have you checked their references?
- Is the quote comprehensive and detailed?

**Remember, the cheapest doesn't always mean the best!**

\*\*Why is this important? OOWA is the voice of onsite and decentralized wastewater experts in Ontario. OOWA provides training and skills development opportunities in addition to industry best practice resources for our members.

Find OOWA members on our member directory at [www.oowa.org/business-directory-map/](http://www.oowa.org/business-directory-map/)



### TIP

The Ontario Building Code mandates that tanks be pumped when they reach 1/3 solids. Get to know your usage by talking to your pumpier or use the 3-5 year rule of thumb if you are in doubt.

## Why is maintaining your sewage system so important?

Properly functioning onsite sewage systems can increase the value of your home, prevent costly repairs, help prevent raw effluent and excessive nutrients from leaching into our waterways, and help prevent contamination of aquifers - your source of drinking water!



Clogged effluent filters can lead to sewage back ups.



Homeowners can and should clean their effluent filters annually.



Tank risers ensure safety and accessibility for servicing.



Landscaping so that the risers are easily accessible.

### TIP

When buying a house, make sure to ask for the past and present sewage system records, including any maintenance or pump out receipts/reports that have been done. A new sewage system is a major financial investment, so be sure to take that into consideration when purchasing a home.

[www.oowa.org](http://www.oowa.org)

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## A Homeowner's Guide to a Healthy Sewage System



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# Sewage System Do's and Don'ts

## Sewage System DO's

- **Do** keep accurate records of maintenance, pump outs and service calls
- **Do** keep a system diagram for reference
- **Do** repair leaky plumbing fixtures
- **Do** replace old toilets with low-flush models
- **Do** ensure safety screens have been properly installed.
- **Do** install an effluent filter in your septic tank to protect your leaching bed and ensure compliance with the Ontario Building Code
- **Do** keep the access lids easily accessible and securely fastened
- **Do** ensure that your home insurance policy includes a sewage back-up rider
- **Do** ensure that the leaching bed has adequate erosion control post installation (grass)
- **Do** ensure all contractors know the location of your leaching bed and that any final landscaping does not impact the bed

## Sewage System DON'Ts

- **Don't** allow vehicles to drive over or park on the leaching bed
- **Don't** build skating rinks or above ground pools on it
- **Don't** dig without knowing the location of your sewage system
- **Don't** plant any trees or shrubs on or near the bed; their roots can clog pipes
- **Don't** drain downspouts, sump pumps, etc. down or near the tanks or leaching bed
- **Don't** build over the tank or leaching bed with a hard surface such as asphalt, brick or patio stones
- **Don't** excessively water the lawn/install automatic lawn sprinklers over the leaching bed
- **Don't** use a garbage disposal/garburator

# What NOT to put into your sewage system:

- Anti-bacterial soaps
- Automatic toilet bowl cleaners
- "Flushable" wipes or other sanitary products
- Liquid fabric softeners
- Harsh chemicals
- Food scraps and coffee grounds
- Fats/oils/grease
- Drain de-cloggers
- Pharmaceuticals

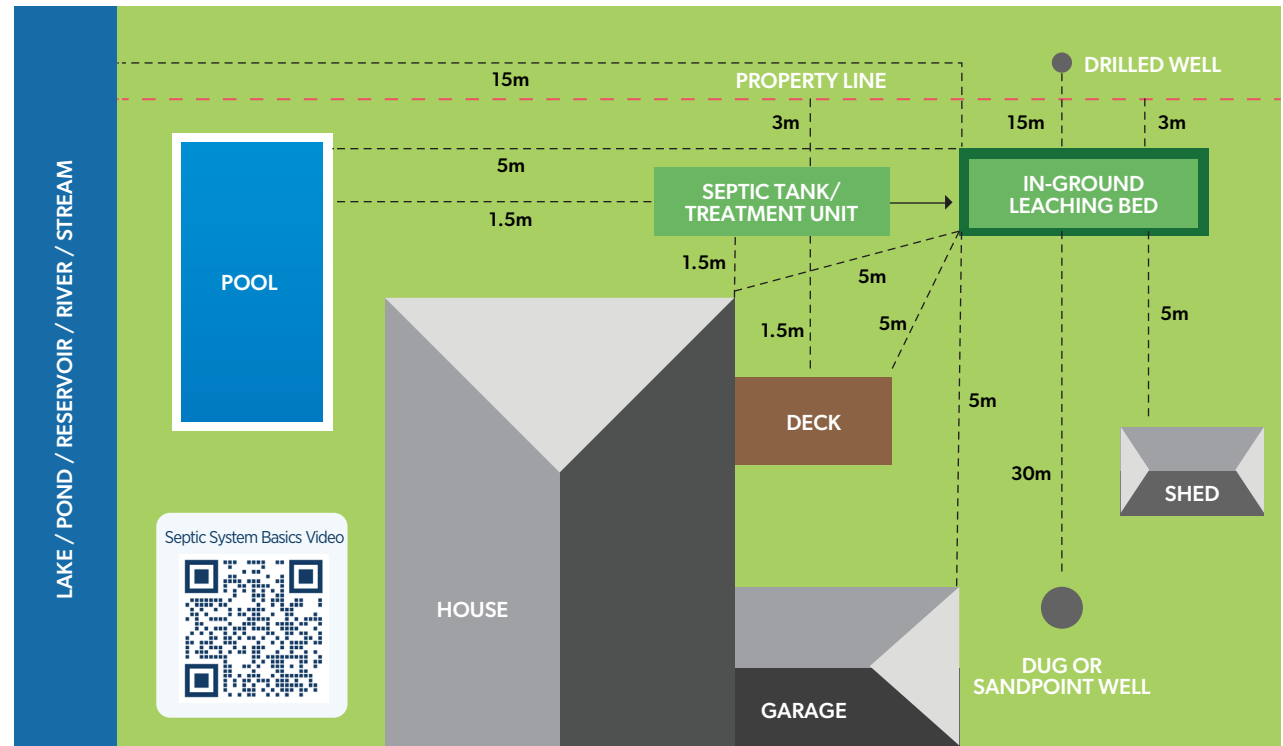
Watch our Video



**Remember to only use natural and biodegradable cleaning products!**

# Preliminary steps you need to install a sewage system:

1. Find out who the regulatory body is.  
Call your local municipality to find out. Also find out if there are any special requirements for your property.
2. Get a professional to help you file your application.  
Qualified installers and designers can be found on OOWA's member directory.
3. Get a sewage system application form.  
As provided by your principal authority.
4. Have all the required information ready.  
These will be stated on your application form.



## Notes:

1. The distances shown in this plan are minimum requirements from the Ontario Building Code.
2. Clearance distances may need to be increased depending on site conditions and the type of system.
3. If the distances on this plan cannot be met, you can propose an "alternate solution" that will be considered by the agency reviewing your sewage system application.

## TIP

Onsite sewage systems should last between 20-30 years or longer if properly maintained. To make sure yours is functioning properly, call your local qualified and registered wastewater professional.

Find a Professional

