HM

HOMEOWNER'S MANUAL

Onsite Wastewater Collection & Treatment Systems

Preventive Maintenance for

Homes with Onsite Wastewater

Collection and Treatment

Systems

Congratulations!

Your home includes reliable, carefully engineered equipment — manufactured by Orenco Systems®, Inc. — for the collection and/or treatment of household wastewater.

When properly designed and installed, onsite wastewater treatment does a terrific job of decomposing household waste and recycling precious water resources. Our systems frequently outperform municipal sewage treatment plants. And the treated effluent is often returned harmlessly to the soil, where it receives final polishing and filtration for groundwater recharge. There's no degrading of our nation's rivers and oceans . . . which is so often the case with municipal sewage.

As with any engineered system, such as your car or your heat pump, your onsite wastewater system will work better and last longer if it is regularly maintained by a qualified service provider. Your service provider should be present during installation, so he or she is familiar with your system, especially those service lines, conduits, and connections that get buried. And your service provider should have a copy of this manual. (Call 1-800-348-9843 and we'll send you another.)

Your system will also work better and last longer if you learn what can go into it — and what can not. Little effort is required. Just read and practice the "do's and don'ts" that follow. Every member of your household should be familiar with these. And if you have guests who want to "help out in the kitchen," be sure to tell them, too. With this preventive maintenance, along with periodic inspections, your onsite wastewater system should function for decades. And you'll save water and energy, too!

There's a place on the back of this Homeowner's Manual to record "Important System Facts." If those have not been filled in for you, please record those now, before you file this Manual away. And give a copy of these facts to your service provider, especially if your service provider changes. You'll be glad you did.

Preventive Maintenance for Homes with Onsite Wastewater Collection and Treatment Systems

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 page 4) 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, or 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 your drainfield and 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.

There are a number of do's and don'ts that will help ensure a long life and minimal maintenance for your system. As a general rule, nothing should be disposed into any wastewater system that hasn't first been ingested, other than toilet tissue, mild detergents, and wash water. Here are some additional guidelines.

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR INSIDE THE HOUSE

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.

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 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 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'S AND DON'TS FOR INSIDE THE HOUSE

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) without chlorine or phosphates. Or use soap flakes with 1/3 cup of washing soda. (Before switching, wash clothes in pure washing soda to remove residues.)

DO'S AND DON'TS FOR OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

DON'T dig without knowing the location of your wastewater treatment 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 treatment system and tanks. 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. (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, reduce the capacity of the collection and treatment systems, and flood the drainfield. 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 Orenco Systems immediately for replacement: 1-800-348-9843.

DON'T enter your tank. Any work to the tank should be done from the outside. Gases that can be generated in the tank and/or oxygen depletion can be fatal.
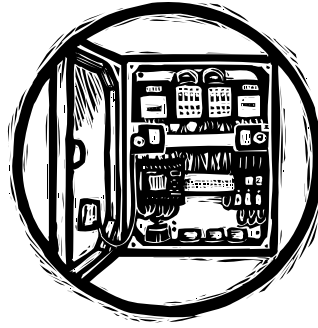
OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

DO make arrangements with a reliable service person to provide regular monitoring and maintenance. Place the service person's phone number on or in your control panel!

DO keep a file copy of your service provider's sludge and scum monitoring report and pumpout schedule. This information will be beneficial for real estate transactions or regulatory visits.

DO keep an "as built" system diagram in a safe place for reference.

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 treatment system and electrical control panel. Refer to the panel's model number (on the back of this booklet) when reporting a malfunction in the system.

DO take immediate action to correct the problem in the event of an alarm condition. Call your system operator or maintenance company immediately whenever an alarm comes on; it sounds like a smoke alarm.

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 24-48 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.

Important! Caution!

Only a qualified electrician or authorized installer/operator should work on your control panel. Before anyone does any work on either the wiring to the level control floats and pumps in the vault or on the control panel itself, it is imperative to first switch the isolation fuse/breaker and the circuit breakers in the panel to the "Off" positions, then switch "Off" the power to the system at the main breaker!

*AdvanTex®
Treatment System
AXN Models meet
the requirements
of NSF-ANSI
Standard 40 for
Class I Systems.*

DO keep accurate records of maintenance and service calls. Make sure whoever services your tank keeps a complete record, and ask for a copy for your records.

IMPORTANT SYSTEM FACTS

Distributor or Dealer:

Please fill out the following important information before giving out this Homeowner's Manual:

Dealer Name

Dealer Address

Dealer Phone Number(s)

Authorized Service Provider Name

Authorized Service Provider Phone Number(s)

Authorized Installer Name

Authorized Installer Phone Number(s)

Engineer Name (if applicable)

Engineer Phone Number(s)

Regulatory Agency

Regulatory Contact Name

Regulatory Contact Phone Number(s)

Permit # (if applicable)

Property Address

Property Owner Name(s)

Start-Up Date

AdvanTex® Model #

AdvanTex® Serial # (on filter pod)

Control Panel Model #

Orenco Systems®
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World Does Wastewater®*

800-348-9843
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