

Common Causes of Septic System Failure

Broken or Missing Outlet Tee/Baffle

The outlet tee (or concrete baffle) keeps floating organic matter from going into the Soil Treatment Area (STA or leach field). Even just a few weeks with a broken or missing outlet tee (or corroded baffle) can cause an STA to fail.

Plugged Effluent Filter

Some systems use a filter placed in the outlet tee to protect your STA from tiny particles suspended in the septic tank. These filters can plug if neglected for too long. When they become plugged, it can block the flow of water causing it to back up into your basement!

Overloading your system: Leaking toilet/faucet, Irrigation over STA, Water Softener

A typical septic system for a 3-5 bedroom home is designed to take between 350 to 675 gallons per day. A **leaking faucet/toilet** can release an additional 1000+ gallons of water in 24 hours. If the issue is not addressed quickly, it can cause your STA to fail prematurely within just days or weeks. If there is **irrigation over the STA**, over time the ground will not be able to absorb all of that additional water and the STA may fail. This is commonly evident by water surfacing on top of the ground or backing up into the house. A **water softener** can also overload a septic system and release salt or chemicals that kill the good bacteria in the system or alter the chemistry of the soil in the STA.

Roots

Roots can infiltrate the smallest gaps in the piping or concrete of your septic tank. They can clog the pipes and cause the septage to backup into your home. If you do have a root problem, you may want to consider removing the plant(s) that are causing the issues or apply root killer along your septic lines and around your tank.

Compaction over an STA

70% of compaction happens the first time you drive over an STA. Compaction over an STA can crush the piping or chambers that lie underground. Compaction also limits evapotranspiration and negatively affects the STA's ability to treat effluent. Do not drive or park vehicles or heavy objects over the top of an STA. Do not allow cattle or horses on top of the STA.

Cracks/Deterioration in tank

Over time concrete tanks deteriorate due to the gases produced in a septic tank. Cracks or deterioration of a tank is an automatic failure in a certified inspection.

Settling in the lines

Settling in the lines can cause a belly in the pipe where water and solids gather and block the proper flow. If severe enough, this block can cause the septage to back up into the home. If you are having slow drainage or suspect a line issue, having a camera scope done can tell you how severe it is and if it needs to be cleaned or replaced.

Pump Issues

A pump is a key component of any pressure dosed system and if not working properly can cause the tank to overload. Often it is just a case of adjusting or replacing the float switches that control the on and off functions of the pump.

For more information, call 303-791-0520
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