

INFO from Yates Mill Run HOA about Septic/Sewer

Do we have City Sewer or Septic System?

We have a hybrid system of both City Sewer and Septic system. Each home has 2 septic tanks in a series. The first tank has a capacity of approximately 900 gallons. The second tank has a capacity of approximately 400 gallons. The first tank remains full at all times and once you use water in the home such as bathing, cooking, clothes washing and using the toilet; every gallon that goes in pushes a gallon in to the second tank. The second tank has a pump with a float switch. As the second tank fills to about 250 gallons, the pump kicks on and pumps the water into the sewer line, pressurizing it, that goes down the street to a large pump station at the back of our subdivision. There is a 3,000 gallon tank that chemically treats the water then it is pumped through a pipe line down Yates Mill Pond Road and empties in to a manhole by Silver Lake on Tryon Road. From there it goes to the City of Raleigh sewer system.

Who is responsible for maintaining the system?

Homeowners are responsible for all of the plumbing in their house and the pipe that leads out of the house. The homeowner is also responsible for the control box with the red light, both tanks, the pump in the second tank and the pipe from the pump to and including the buried junction/valve in the yard. The City Of Raleigh is responsible for the pipe from the junction box to the main pipe line down the street to the pump house, the tanks, chemicals and the pipe line down Yates Mill Pond Road to the manhole by Silver Lake.

How do we maintain our individual system?

The system is designed primarily to process water and human waste. There is a bacterium in the 900 gallon Tank 1 that breaks down the waste in to fine particles that get stirred up as water enters the system. This causes the water to be cloudy and the cloudy water is pushed into Tank 2 as water is introduced into Tank 1. Because of the design the system, is not very effective at breaking down other materials. It is particularly harmful to the system to introduce oil and grease and other solids. Since oil and grease float, all of the oil and grease create what is called a "Grease Cake" floating on the top of the water. The "Grease Cake" looks like Lard or Crisco Shortening and is very difficult to break up. Over time, the "Grease Cake" gets thicker and thicker. It will eventually get so thick it will begin to restrict/block the pipe from Tank 1 to Tank 2. This can ultimately cause Tank 1 to back up into the house and or into the yard. Prior to that, some grease may flow into Tank 2 and can cause the pump to fail. Even when you use hot water and soap to break down the oil or grease, the outlet pipe is cold as is the water in Tank 1. This

can cause oil and grease to harden along the walls of the outlet pipe and add to the “Grease Cake” in Tank 1.

One way to minimize the build-up of the “Grease Cake” is to pour the oil and or grease into a container and dispose of the container properly. You should also use a paper towel to wipe off the excess oil or grease from the pan, utensils and plates until they appear to be dry. Generally speaking you should not use a garbage disposal unless it is specifically designed for a septic system. This type of disposal chops up the materials into to finer parts making it a little easier on the system and reduce the chances of damaging the pump. Whenever possible throw the materials out in the garbage or make a compost bin. This means any food scrapes (including vegetables and meat trimmings) created in food preparation or left-overs should be discarded in the trash. Other things to avoid are feminine hygiene products as these can clog the pump motor rather easily. If you use a lot of bleach products, these will kill the bacterium in the system and create more solids in the Tanks. You may wish to use septic system enzyme/bacteria to treat your system to help break down the solids. We would suggest you research which product would be best to use by contacting a septic company, Raleigh Utilities Department or research online. The necessity of using such products is dependent on how you use your system. Depending on the use of your system and the number of individuals in the household, your Tanks should be pumped every 3-5 years. The regular pumping will remove the solids and “Grease Cake” which may extend the life of your pump and preventing a backup into your home or spilling out into your yard.

What is the Green Box with the Red Light attached to my house or in my yard?

This is the control panel for your pump. Should your pump fail, the Red Light will start flashing and there should be a loud buzzer that goes off. There should be a switch that allows you to silence the alarm; if it is not working there should be another box with a switch/handle to turn off the power located near the control box. The important thing to remember is that you will have minimal storage capacity in Tank 2 of about a day. Try not to do laundry, bathe, and dishes at this time. Use the toilet sparingly. If you continue to use your system while the alarm goes off, the water needs to go somewhere, perhaps backing up into your home. If it backs up in to the yard do not step in it, allow you children or pets to walk through it as it is a bio-hazard. **You will need to contact a septic system company or a plumber.**