

**BROWN COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
120 E MAIN ST.
MT STERLING, IL 62353**

TIPS ON HOW TO AVOID SEPTIC PROBLEMS

- ❑ Make certain to have the septic tank pumped regularly. Depending on the household size the tank should be pumped every 3-5 years. Letting the tank become overloaded with sludge will shorten the life of a septic system.
- ❑ Use water wisely. Good water conservation practices can protect your septic system from premature failure. Whenever possible add water conservation devices on all plumbing fixtures. The bathroom is a good place to start.
- ❑ Do not pour toxic substances into drains. Toxic substances such as paints, solvents, oils, degreasers, acids, and pesticides can damage beneficial bacteria in the septic tank and contaminate groundwater.
- ❑ Regularly check plumbing fixtures. Leaking toilets, faucets and washing machines can tax the ability of the septic system to treat the added water. A leaking toilet can add up to 200 gallons of water a day to the septic system.
- ❑ Do not put non-biodegradable items in the toilet. They can block the septic tank's inlet or outlet pipes. Non-biodegradable items can also damage components of an aeration treatment unit.
- ❑ Keep vehicles and heavy equipment off of the Septic system. Soils can become compacted and components of the system can be damaged.
- ❑ Do not plant new trees or ornamental shrubs too close to the septic system. Tree roots can grow into perforated pipes and clog the system.
- ❑ Do not build over the septic system. Constructing driveways, patios, aboveground swimming pools and other structures can damage the septic system. Check with your local health department, they may have information on the septic system.
- ❑ If the house has a sump pump, it should be checked to make sure it is not connected to the septic system or that it is flowing across the system. The extra water could flood the system.
- ❑ Roof drains and surface water should be directed away from the septic system.

Not sure where your septic system is located? Check with your local health department. The health department maintains records on permitted septic systems.