



MOST LEAKS AREN'T SO OBVIOUS

Failing septic systems or broken sewer pipes can connect your plumbing through groundwater to our bays and beaches — where untreated nutrient and bacteria pollution fuel harmful algal blooms, kill aquatic life, and threaten public health and quality of life.

Septic Systems

Even when properly sited, operated, and maintained, conventional septic systems only remove 30–40% of nitrogen input. Underperforming or failing systems can be much worse.

Central Sewer

If damaged, the private pipes that connect your house to the public system can allow nitrogen and bacteria-laden wastes to leak out or rainwater to leak in and overload the system.

**PROPER MAINTENANCE AND USE
OF SEPTIC & SEWER SYSTEMS
PROTECTS OUR WATERS AND BEACHES**



THINGS YOU CAN DO

If you have a Septic System

Septic tanks and drainfields require regular maintenance.

- Schedule pumpouts and inspections every 3–5 years.
- Fix leaky fixtures and use less water during rainstorms to avoid overloading the system.
- Compost kitchen scraps, rather than using your garbage disposal, to extend time between pumpouts.
- Avoid disposing harmful chemicals in sinks and toilets; they can kill the biological treatment in your system.
- Avoid driving or parking vehicles over your drainfield to prevent compacting soils or damaging pipes.
- Avoid planting trees or shrubs over or near your drainfield to prevent damage from roots.

If you're connected to Central Sewer

Sewer pipes (laterals) connecting your home's plumbing to the central sewer line are your responsibility to inspect and maintain. Schedule an inspection if you detect any of these symptoms:

- Regular sewage backups or slow drains
- Sewer gas odor in or around your home
- Unexplained patches of extra-green grass, depressions, or damp spots in your landscaping

The Unflushables

Septic and sanitary sewer systems cannot handle these cloggers and chemicals:

dental floss • cotton swabs • feminine hygiene products
condoms • diapers • baby wipes (even "flushables")
cigarette butts • coffee grounds • cat litter • paper towels
fats, oils, and grease • poisons • gasoline • pesticides
paint • medicines.

**PROTECT OUR WATERS
AND BEACHES**