



(541) 567-8940

How To Choose A Septic System

A septic system consists of two basic parts: a septic tank and an underground disposal field (also called a drain field, leachfield or soil absorption field). Wastewater flows from the house to the tank, and effluent water (the wastewater minus the solids) flows from the tank to the drain field. The main job of the tank is to intercept the solids and the main job of the drain field is to purify and disperse the effluent. The soil filters and purifies the effluent before returning it to the water table where it will evaporate or be taken in by plants.

There are many variations of this basic septic design. Each system is uniquely determined by how much water the house will be using, how strong the waste will be, soil consistency, location of the groundwater table, and the property size.

The first decision you'll make about your new septic system is the tank size. Residential septic tanks can range in size from 50 to 3000 gallons, with the average tank holding somewhere between 500 to 1000 gallons. The state of Oregon has minimum size standards, based on the number of bedrooms in a home: a 1,000-gallon tank for four bedrooms or less and a 1,500-gallon tank for five or more bedrooms.

Consider other factors that will have an influence on the system. Ask yourself:

- **How many people will be living in the home?**
- **Will you have a Jacuzzi tub or garbage disposal?**
- **What are your cleaning habits?**
- **Do you entertain frequently?**

Your answers to these questions and others will help determine the best tank size for your system.

The next item to consider is tank configuration. Tanks come in different shapes and sizes: tall or short, narrow or wide, one or two compartments. Each tank configuration has its own advantages and disadvantages, and we'll be happy to explain the differences to you.

Finally, you'll decide on the tank material. Septic tanks can be made from steel, concrete, fiberglass, low-density plastic, and high-density plastic. Because steel is prone to rust, and low-density can easily warp and change shape over time, we rarely recommend tanks made from these two materials.

- **Concrete tanks** are a popular alternative due to their relatively low cost and long-lasting durability. Concrete tanks are normally placed a few feet below ground.
- **Fiberglass** is a popular choice; however, it has a relatively high price so many homeowners ultimately go with another option.
- **High-density plastic tanks** are lightweight with unmatched structural integrity.

We understand that a new septic system is a big investment. Westfall Septic specializes in septic tank replacements, and we install more septic systems than any other company in Umatilla County. We're happy to answer all your questions, and to work with you to find the best system to fit your needs, your property configuration, and your budget.

To get started, please call us at (541) 567-8940.