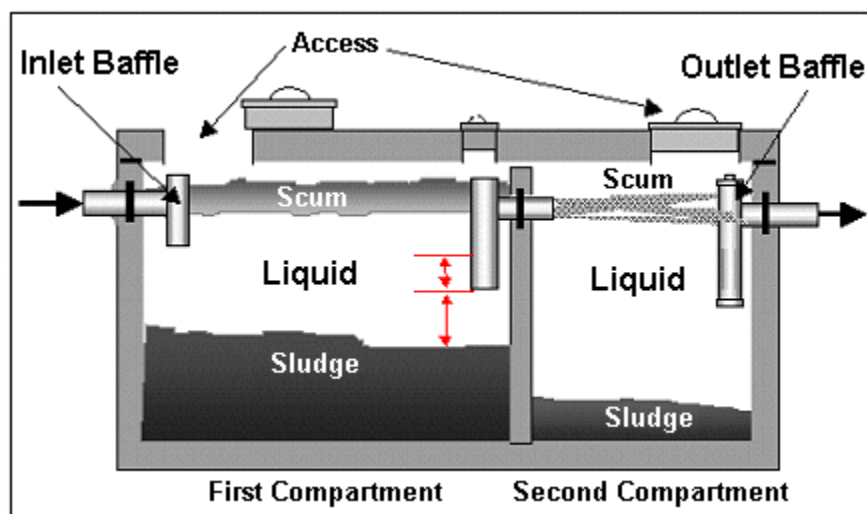


Septic Tank Effluent Filters

An inexpensive tool that can prevent or limit serious damage to a septic system's leach field.

The Septic Tank

Septic tanks are designed to collect wastewater from your home, separate liquids from solids, hold the solids in place and allow only the liquids to leave the tank. If solids exit the tank and move into the leach field, they could plug the leach field pipes and/or the soil. When this occurs, wastewater is not dispersed or treated effectively, and ultimately usually leads to an expensive repair or replacement of the soil treatment area.



The Effluent Filter

Effluent filters come in various shapes and sizes, but all work on the same principle. They are located in the outlet baffle of the septic tank (see image above). Placed in this location, the effluent filter will capture and hold back any solids in the wastewater before exiting the tank. All septic tanks installed after 2007 have been required to have an effluent filter installed in the outlet baffle. Many tanks that were installed before 2007 do not have this filter. Most septic

tanks along with aeration tanks can be retrofitted with an effluent filter. Contact this office or a sewage service provider to determine if your tank can be retrofitted for a filter.

Effluent Filter Maintenance

All effluent filters require regular cleaning in order to work effectively. An effluent filter should need to be cleaned out more often than having the septic tank pumped. Cleaning the screen only when the septic tank is pumped out can result in a plugged screen. The frequency of cleaning is dependent on a number of factors including water and disposal habits within the house (using a garbage disposal increases the frequency) and the size of the effluent filter. A homeowner can clean the filter themselves or have a registered service provider clean it for them.

Home Owner Cleaning Instructions

- 1. DO NOT ENTER** the septic tank for any reason! Noxious gasses exist in septic tanks and can result in serious injury or death. There is never a reason you would need to enter the tank in order to clean the screen.
- 2.** Put on waterproof, disposable gloves and safety glasses or face shield. Remove the outlet side tank lid where the effluent filter is located. The liquid level in the tank should be at the bottom of the outlet pipe. If the liquid level is above the outlet pipe or the effluent filter is submerged, contact this office or a service provider to investigate this situation, which may require the tank to be pumped down before the screen can be cleaned.
- 3.** If the liquid level is at or below the bottom of the outlet pipe, remove the screen from the outlet baffle casing by pulling on the handle located in the center of the screen. (The screen may have a "locking clip" that needs to be pulled toward the handle before the screen will slide out.) Using a garden hose, spray off the screen over the first (inlet) manhole or place the screen in a 5 gallon bucket, collecting all the material in the bucket. Be extremely careful to prevent splashing onto your body or clothes or into the yard. Do not clean the effluent screen in the grass, exposure to raw sewage is a public health hazard.



4. Return the screen to the outlet baffle casing once it has been cleaned. If you used a bucket to collect the contents of the effluent filter, dump this liquid back into the first manhole opening. Add a small amount of bleach (1/4 cup or less) to the bucket and rinse several times, dumping this back into the septic manhole opening. Double check to ensure the effluent screen is secured in position, and properly secure the manhole covers.
5. Dispose of your gloves properly, wash your hands and other exposed areas of your body with hot soap and water. If your clothes were possibly contaminated, immediately wash them in hot water.

If you have any questions regarding this handout, your effluent screen, or your entire septic system, please do not hesitate to contact this office at 740-592-4431.