



Managing Your Septic System in a Flood

Flooding can have various impacts on your home's septic system (on-site wastewater system). Floodwater can damage the system's physical structure, preventing wastewater from being treated properly. Floodwater can also overwhelm wastewater systems and cause wastewater to back up into your home.

What should I do if my wastewater system was impacted by the flood?

- ▶ **If you have experienced flood-related damage to your septic system** (on-site wastewater system), [contact your regional engineer](#) for support. Department of Environmental Conservation technical staff are available to provide support to the homeowner, licensed designer and excavating contractor.
- ▶ **If your septic system pump or other electric controls are malfunctioning** or inoperable, call an electrician to service the controls. Contact a licensed wastewater system designer to assess impacts to your septic system.
- ▶ **Stay away from floodwaters**, and any puddles or flowing water that may have been impacted by wastewater, which can expose you to potentially harmful bacteria, viruses, and/or chemicals. Avoid contact with any outdoor items exposed to the water until you have cleaned them and washed your hands thoroughly. This includes, but is not limited to, children's toys and gardening tools left outside during the flooding event.
- ▶ **Inspect your septic system.** Once surface water and groundwater return to normal levels and wastewater pumpers are able to return to full operation, your wastewater system should be inspected and if necessary pumped. Call your wastewater service provider or local wastewater hauler and put your name on their list to be inspected or serviced once conditions allow.

What should I do if wastewater has backed up into my home?

If wastewater has backed up into your home, please leave the property until the floodwaters have receded. Once it is safe to return:

- ▶ **Remove wastewater from your home.** Small amounts of wastewater should be collected in buckets and put into the wastewater system once it is back in service. Large amounts of wastewater should be removed by a septic tank pumper. If a septic pumper is not available, [contact your local regional engineer](#) for guidance.
- ▶ **Clean the area** exposed to wastewater and either disinfect or discard items as follows:

