

Gravity System Inspection & Maintenance Checklist

Septic tank:

- Inspect the tank lids/access risers for a tight seal and for root and/or surface/ground water intrusion.
- Monitor the inlet & outlet pipes for surface/ground water intrusion and/or root intrusion into the tank and check for pooling of sewage outside the tank.
- Monitor for leaky interior plumbing fixtures (continuous water flowing into the tank from the house). If present it could potentially hydraulically overload the system.
- Inspect the inlet baffle and the center baffle if visible. The top of the scum layer should not cover either baffle.
- Remove, inspect & clean the outlet baffle filter/screen if equipped.
- Monitor effluent level at the outlet baffle – it should be at the base of the horizontal 4 inch outlet pipe (plus/minus 1 inch). Liquid below the outlet pipe could indicate a leaking tank – liquid above the pipe could indicate a hydraulically overloaded drainfield.
- Check if effluent is draining back to the septic tank from the drainfield (a sign the drainfield is hydraulically overloaded).
- Measure scum & sludge layers in all tank compartments. If the combined total is more than 30% of total working depth of the tank, the tank should be pumped.

Distribution Box (“d” box) & Drainfield:

- Locate and inspect “d”-box if equipped - check for the following:
 - ✓ Uneven settling.
 - ✓ Levelness of inverts of outlets.
 - ✓ Uniformity of outlet flow – install speed levelers if not uniform.
 - ✓ Depth of effluent – if above outlet pipe base could indicate hydraulically overload drainfield.
 - ✓ Solids accumulation and surface/ground water and/or root intrusion.
- Monitor the observation/monitoring ports if equipped. Check for ponding – measure using a wood dowel or tape measure. If more than an inch monitor over next few hour and/or days. Compare to previous inspections.
- Inspect the drainfield area – look for surfacing sewage, soggy, mushy or swampy areas, isolated green patches on lawn, and plants that grown in marshy environments and monitor for strong odors. If any of these conditions are present, it might indicate a failure.
- Check if the drainfield and the reserve drainfield area (repair area) are being properly maintained and covered with appropriate vegetation.