

Aerobic Systems: What Maintenance is needed?

It is a good idea for the homeowner or the service provider to keep detailed records about the system and service visits. Keep a copy of your health department permit. You should receive a maintenance contract for two years from the installer. It usually includes two visits per year for two years. Ask about the user's manual that describes such things as the manufacturer's recommendations for the unit, the system design, how to operate and maintain it, as well as how to tell if it is working properly. **It is extremely important that aerobic systems receive regular maintenance.**

Tips for Maintaining Your Septic System

- Do not put too much water into the septic system; typical water use is about 50 gallons per day for each person in the family.
- Do not add materials (chemicals, sanitary napkins, applicators, diapers and other foreign objects) other than domestic wastewater. Your toilet is not a trashcan.
- Do not use a garbage disposal or at least **restrict** the use of your garbage disposal.
- Do not pour grease or cooking oils down the sink drain.
- Periodically have the solids pumped out as needed.
- Do not attempt to clean or perform maintenance on any sealed aerobic unit components.
- Keep surface waters away from the unit and drainfield.
- Keep automobiles and heavy equipment off the system.
- Do not plan any building additions, pools, driveways, or other construction work near the septic system or the drainfield area.
- Do maintain electrical power to the compressor at all times.
- Do make a diagram showing the location of your aerobic unit (and drainfield area).

What needs to be done to the Aerobic System?

It is important that mechanical components in aerobic systems receive regular inspections and maintenance. For example, air compressors sometimes need to be oiled, and vanes, filters, and seals may need to be replaced. In most cases, homeowners do not have the expertise to inspect, repair, and maintain their own systems. So, it is a good idea to renew their service agreements after the first two years or find another service organization to take over this job.

What will be checked during the inspection?

During a typical visit, the service provider will remove the unit's cover and check its general appearance. They will check the pipes and the inside of the aeration chamber, note the appearance of the wastewater inside the unit, its color and odor. If the unit includes a chlorinator, this too will also be checked and cleaned. The operator will check to see that all mechanical parts, alarms, and controls are in working order and that solids are pumped from the system if needed. If there is a soil absorption field such as chamber, it may also be checked at this time.

Record Keeping is an important part of Maintenance

It is a good idea for the homeowner or the service provider to keep detailed records about the system and the service visits. As Homeowners, you should keep your own copies of all records and permits. The dealer or the licensed private sewage contractor will most likely carry out Service visits. The first service should be soon after the system is installed to make sure that everything is working correctly. Know your contract. The service contract may or may not cover such problems as damage from power failures, breaking or crushing of pipes leading to and from the system, flooding, fires, homeowner misuse, etc.

WARNING SIGNS!

- ! Alarms or lights going off
- ! Any changes in the system's normal operating sound
- ! Any changes in the normal color of the wastewater
- ! Excessive solids, foam, or scum in the unit
- ! Plumbing backups
- ! Sewage odors in the house or yard

Remember.....

Do keep detailed records including a map of where it is, permit, model name, date installed, contract service agreement, records of services performed, etc.

Do divert other sources of water like roof drains, house footing drains, and sump pumps away from the aerobic system.

Do call a service professional for routine maintenance and whenever you experience problems with your system or if the alarms go off.

Egyptian Public Health Department