



## Gloucester Department of Community Engagement and Public Information

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Regular Septic Pump-outs Required in Gloucester

With the holidays in full swing, County officials are encouraging residents to make sure they complete the necessary regular maintenance on their septic systems. Both Virginia Code and Gloucester County's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance Sec. 5.5-9(b)(5) specifies that all on-site sewage disposal systems be pumped out at least once every five years.

According to Kevin Landry, Environmental Program Manager, research has shown that failing septic systems contribute considerable amounts of pollution to groundwater and the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. By having one's septic tanks pumped before it is full, the number of solids leaving the septic tanks and migrating into the drainfield is greatly reduced, allowing the drainfield to function as designed for a much greater length of time.

To have your system pumped out or inspected, you may contact any sewage handler licensed to operate within the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Landry added that regular pump-outs not only protect the environment, but also protects public health. "A full or poorly maintained septic system can cause contaminants to spread onto your property, putting you and your pets at risk for disease," Landry said.

Regular pump-outs also allow the system to operate more efficiently, saving the owner money. For example, a septic tank with too much sludge cannot process wastewater effectively or efficiently. The system becomes imbalanced and can fail. Then, replacement of a failed tank can be both costly and inconvenient.

Aside from regular pump-outs, Landry offers several other tips to avoid overloading your septic system during the holiday season. He suggests staggering use of water-based appliances during the holiday

season. He also said to avoid putting food waste down the drain and to stay away from pouring cooking grease and oil down the drain. Finally, he suggests not flushing items other than toilet paper down the toilet.

For more information regarding this, or other requirements of the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Ordinance, contact Ron Owens, Chesapeake Bay Programs Administrator in the Environmental Programs office at 804-693-1217 or [rowens @gloucester.va.info](mailto:rowens@gloucester.va.info).

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