

- appliances, use high efficiency plumbing fixtures, and repair any leaks in your home.
- For more information, go to <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/>
- Shield your field.
  - Keep your car and anything heavier than your lawnmower off your drainfield.
  - Eliminate or limit the use of a garbage disposal. This will significantly reduce the amount of fats, grease, and solids that enter your septic system and could clog your drainfield.
  - Plant trees away from the drainfield since tree roots can clog the field and cause the system to fail.
  - Keep excess water from irrigation, significant rainfall, or drains off the drainfield.

## Step 4: Preventive Maintenance

### What else can I do to help maintain my system?

A typical septic system should be inspected every three to five years by a septic system service provider. The tank should be pumped as recommended by the service provider or as required by your town, county, or state. Generally, you can plan to have the tank pumped approximately every three to five years. Just like changing the oil in your car, preventive septic system maintenance will extend the life of your system for a small cost compared to the cost of replacing the system.

### What are the costs associated with the maintenance of a septic system?

Your home's septic system should be inspected every three to five years as part of its routine maintenance and pumped as necessary depending on the results of the inspection. The maintenance service typically costs between \$250 to \$500, based on nationwide industry estimates. Maintenance costs are much more affordable compared to the expense of repairing or replacing a septic system which can cost thousands to tens of thousands of dollars. Contact a local septic system service provider who can provide a cost estimate specific to your area and needs. They can also provide you with more accurate information on how frequently to service and pump out your system.

## Step 5: Corrective Maintenance

### How do I know if my septic system is not working properly? What do I do?

There are a few signs of a septic system malfunction. If you discover any of these warning signs, call a septic system service provider immediately. One call could save you thousands of dollars!

- Wastewater backing up or gurgling into household drains.
- A strong odor around the septic tank or drainfield.
- Bright green, spongy grass appearing on the drainfield.

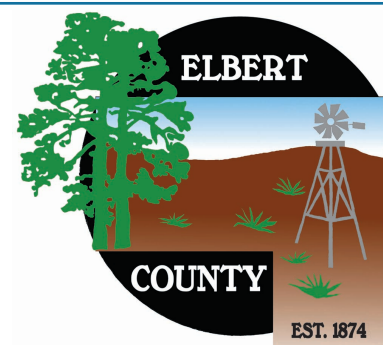
With proper care and maintenance, your septic system will serve your home for years to come. That's why it's important for you to do your part and be SepticSmart!

# New Homebuyer's Guide to Septic Systems (OWTS)

If you are about to purchase a new home with a septic system, this homebuyer guide is for you!

This guide provides information homebuyers need to know before purchasing a home with a septic system (also known as an onsite wastewater system), how a septic system works, and the importance of having it inspected prior to purchasing a home. In addition, this guide provides information on everyday, preventative, and corrective maintenance for when you are living in your new home.

For additional information, contact your local health department, real estate agent or visit [www.epa.gov/septic](http://www.epa.gov/septic).



## ELBERT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

75 Ute Avenue Kiowa, CO 80117  
(303) 621- 3144  
Monday-Thursday 7:30am-5:00pm



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