



Module 4

Troubleshooting



Learning Objectives

1. Solve basic problems you may have with your system
 2. Identify resources to help solve problems
- 



Common Problems with OWTS

1. Improper maintenance

Most common - lack of septic tank pumping

2. Overuse or misuse of the system

Too much water, organics, solids and cleaners

3. System not properly designed or installed

Mistake during design/installation or system not match the use (home, business or small community)



Identify, Locate and Understand Your OWTS

- Septic tank or tanks
 - Effluent filter
- Advanced treatment unit
- Pump, controls and alarm
- Review your design/as-built
- Contact your permitting authority for records
- Ask your installer, service provider or pumper



Locating Your OWTS

- Hire a licensed contractor/installer, service provider or pumper
- Locate your septic tank
 - If there are manholes or inspection pipes at ground level it should be easy to find
 - If not go into basement or crawlspace and determine where sewer pipe (typically largest pipe made of cast iron or plastic) exits the building
 - Then with a metal rod start poking in the soil 10 – 15 feet from the foundation in the direction pipe was leaving the house (be sure to have utilities located)
 - A metal detector may be helpful as many concrete tanks have metal reinforcing rods
 - Often the first spot to melt snow is over the septic tank



Locate Soil Treatment Area

- Look in general direction sewer pipe was leaving the house and after the septic tank if you can find it
- Potential signs are areas where grass isn't growing as well, slight rise or depression, where soil is soggy or vegetation is green while the rest of the yard is dry
- Probe in the soil trying to find media in the system
- **Call a professional who has tools & experience**



Troubleshooting

What's the Problem?



Alarm going off

What's the Problem?



Wastewater backing up in the home

What's the Problem?



Sewage odors in the yard

What's the Problem?

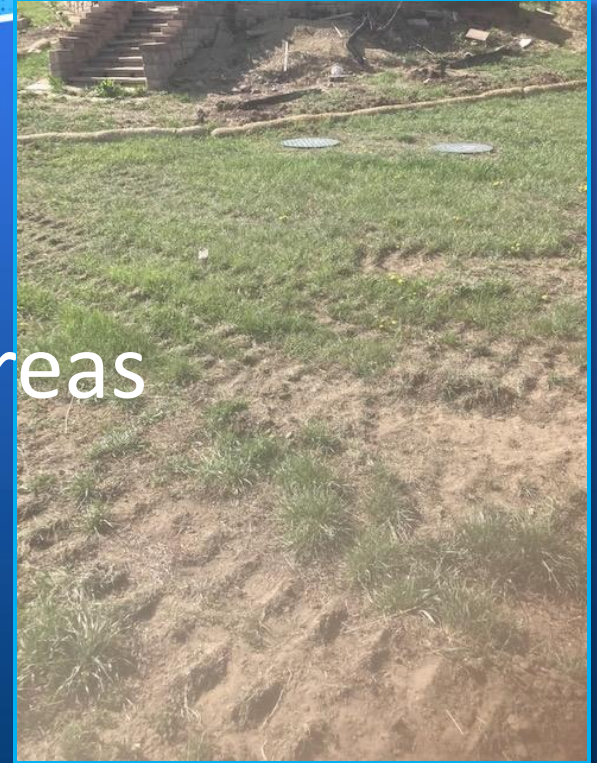


**Electrical cord running through surface water to pump and
poor surface drainage**

What's the Problem?



Soil treatment areas



Lack of vegetation and compaction

What's the Problem?



Crushed and overloaded distribution box

What's the Problem?

Soil treatment area



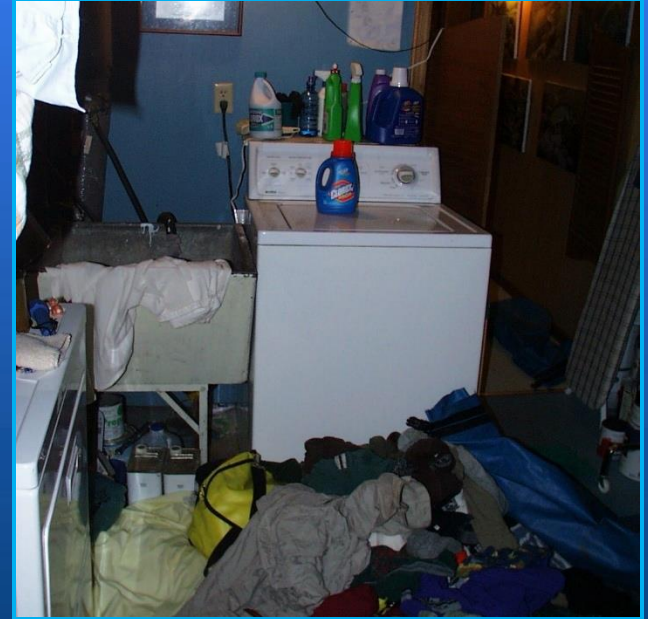
Surfacing of effluent and traffic over the system

What's the Problem?



Roots in a distribution box and out of a septic tank

What's the Problem?



Using more water than need or not spacing out usage

What's the Problem?



Broken pipe full of fat, oil and grease

What's the Problem?



Surfacing of sewage in the yard = health threat

What's the Problem?



Lack of septic tank maintenance

What's the Problem?



Tank lid collapse – safety issue

What's the Problem?



Flushing of inappropriate materials

What's the Problem?



Sludge coming out of a pipe in a media filter

What's the Problem?



System that had not had routine maintenance for 10 years

What's the Problem?



Plugged up effluent screen

What's the Problem?



Chemical/soap upset of the OWTs

What's the Problem?



Frozen system and straw bales for insulation not removed

What's the Problem?



Fire over the OWTs media filter

What's the Problem?



Flooding over the OWTS



Your Problems or Questions



Resources

- See back page of User Guide for:
 - List of state regulatory contacts
 - Product disposal and selection information
 - National level resources from EPA, NOWRA and RCAP



Rural
Community
Assistance
Partnership



National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association



Conclusion of Module 4

INSTRUCTOR NAME

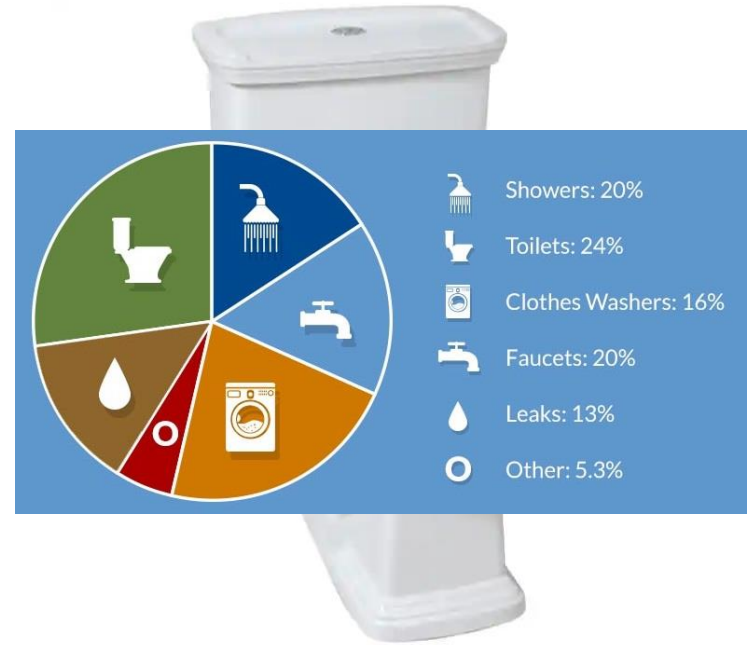
INSTRUCTOR CONTACT INFORMATION



Post Test

What device in the house uses the most water?

1. Clothes washer
2. Shower
3. Toilet
4. Faucets





At what percentage full of solids (sludge and scum) should a septic tank be pumped?

- 10%
- 25%
- 33%
- 50%
- 100%



25%



What is a problem with older toilets?

1. They use 5+ gallons per flush
2. Leaky gaskets



If you don't know where your septic system components are located what can you do?

- Contact your permitting authority for records
- Reach out to the designer, installer, inspector, service provide who was involved with it was designed or hire one to locate it
- Try to find it out your own



Rural
Community
Assistance
Partnership



Course Evaluation

Instructor Name
Contact Information
