

# Septic Safety: What you can do

**Groundwater Management Area (GWMA):**

*The purpose of the GWMA is to reduce nitrate contamination concentrations in groundwater below state drinking water standards*

## Failing septic systems can pollute drinking water wells

### ***Check it, fix it, maintain it:***

Bacteria, viruses and other pollutants from the sewage of a failing septic system, may contaminate drinking water wells, groundwater aquifers, lakes, rivers and streams.

A septic system doesn't have to be a problem.

- Get regular inspections and maintenance. Choose a date or time of the year that's easy to remember for the inspection. Mark it on the calendar.
- Regularly pump your system. Typically, once every three years for a four-person household.
- Learn how to keep your system working properly. Be careful what you flush or pour down the drain. No pet waste, medications, grease, or toxic chemicals.
- Watch for clues that your tank is nearing capacity or your system is failing. Got odors? Get someone to check it out right away. Then fix it, if needed.
- Keep trees at least 30 feet from edge of drain field to keep their roots from invading. Never drive over the system.
- Conserve water. Too much can cause solids to escape your tank and plug your drain field.
- Repair or replace your system when it fails or is otherwise inadequate.

### **Locate your septic tank and drain field:**

- Use your property map or follow discharge pipe from your house. Probe the ground with a rod to determine the location of your septic tank.
- Underground pipes distribute wastewater in a drain field. Wet spots can indicate a failing drain field that needs professional attention.

Do your part to keep groundwater safe and clean.

For more information:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wqguide/septic.html>

<http://www.yakimacounty.us/335/Septic-Systems>

### GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT AREA



The purpose of the Lower Yakima Valley Groundwater Management Area is to reduce nitrate contamination where concentrations do not meet drinking water standards.

### GWAC Working Groups

- Data Collection, Characterization, Monitoring
- Education and Public Outreach
- Funding
- Irrigated Agriculture
- Livestock/CAFO
- Regulatory Framework
- Residential, Commercial, Industrial and Municipal

To get involved, call  
(509) 574-2300

More information at:  
[www.yakimacounty.us](http://www.yakimacounty.us)