



Gwinnett County

Department of Water Resources

Maintaining Septic Systems to Protect Water Quality

Many homeowners in Grayson use a septic system to manage wastewater from their home. Septic systems are a great way to ensure wastewater from our homes is properly treated to prevent pollution in our streams and ponds. A well maintained septic system does this very well, but a failing system can threaten water quality by allowing raw sewage to runoff our properties and into the stormwater drainage system or even directly into a ditch or stream.

When septic systems fail, raw sewage will often seep to the surface leaving a wet spot in the yard and a smelly situation for the owner and their neighbors. If it rains on that failing septic system, the sewage can be washed away and reach surface waters. This can be potentially harmful to public health and to wildlife. In order to prevent septic system failures, there are two things you can do.

First, have your septic tank pumped every 3-5 years. This is a safeguard against solids building up in the tank and passing through to the drain field where a clog can lead to a failure. Second, flush only human waste and toilet paper. Other items such as paper towels, cotton balls or swabs, and wipes will not disintegrate like toilet paper and can fill the tank up too fast. It is important to note that keeping your septic system functioning properly is a preventative measure. By doing these things regularly you can ensure a problem does not develop.

To help with understanding your septic system, the city of Grayson has partnered with Gwinnett Water Resources who offers a "Homeowner's Guide to Septic System Maintenance." You can find this Guide at www.gwinnettH2O.com by clicking on *Get Educated* and then *Septic Tanks*. Any questions you have about your system can be directed to Gwinnett Environmental Health by visiting their website at www.gnrhealth.com, hovering over *Services* and then clicking on *Septic Systems*.

If we all work to maintain our septic systems with effective preventative measures, we can protect the quality of the many surface waters that run throughout our community.

