

Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program

Early Response Applicant Guide

Septic System Projects

Why is it important to properly maintain a septic system?

Properly operating and maintaining your septic system will assist in the prevention of groundwater and surface water contamination, which can cause serious environmental and health problems.

Why apply for this funding?

To protect municipal groundwater and surface water sources through repairing, upgrading or replacing part or all of faulty or malfunctioning septic systems.

Who is eligible to apply?

To be eligible to receive funding under the Early Response Program, landowners must have circumstances consistent with a potential significant drinking water threat from conditions or activities on their property that may pose a significant threat to a municipal drinking water source. Please call 519-470-3000 to find out if you are eligible.

What types of projects are eligible?

- Replace or repair a septic tank, holding tank and/or leaching bed
- Add plumbing connections/pump to transfer wastewater to septic tank and/or leaching bed
- Decommission an existing septic system
- Connect to a municipal sewer line and decommission the existing septic system
- Other measures may be found in the Risk Management Measures catalogue

What costs are eligible?

- Required permits and approvals; material and supplies
- Septic tank inspection
- Contract labour (e.g., electrical and plumbing connections)
- Professional fees/technical support and fees for related design, inspection and construction
- Connection fees and related work to connect to a municipal sewer line

Ineligible projects & costs include but are not limited to:

- Routine maintenance septic tank pumping
- Septic system replacement due to an order by a regulating authority
- Septic installations/upgrades that are part of a new home construction (septic upgrades taking place concurrently with a home addition will be eligible for a rate proportional to the original dwelling size)
- Septic tank inspection under Ontario Building Code Amended Regulation 315/10
- Costs associated with installing new municipal sewer lines/trunk lines
- Labour and machinery of the applicant, family dependents and/or the applicant's business
- Connection to a municipal sewer line without decommissioning an existing septic system
- Landscaping, trees, plants
- Portions of projects that are funded by additional programs/projects (e.g., Water Quality Programs) - applicants may not apply for more than 100 percent of the total cost of their project (***providing inaccurate information on the portion of project funding received by other agencies is an offence***)

Grant Rate: up to 80% of eligible project costs

Grant Ceiling: \$7,000 (conventional systems) \$15,000 (advanced systems)

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Application Process

- Confirm your property and project type are eligible for funding.
- Complete the Early Response application form that applies to your project type.
- Submit your completed application form to the address, email or fax listed on the form. Incomplete or ineligible applications will not be considered or viewed by the Early Response Technical Review Committee. Septic system applications must contain:
 - A completed application form
 - Two quotes from qualified professionals
 - Where failure/malfunction is not obvious an inspection report from a qualified industry professional is required (i.e. engineers, Grey Bruce Health Unit)
 - Old permits

Note:

- There are limited funds available.
- Funds will decrease over the course of the program.
- There are five application periods; deadlines as follows:
 - May 31, 2011
 - August 31, 2011
 - November 30, 2011
 - March 31, 2012
 - June 30, 2012
- A higher percentage of funding will be disbursed after the first deadline with decreasing amounts of funding disbursed after each subsequent deadline.
- No applications will be accepted after June 30, 2012.

- The proposed inspection, upgrade, repair, and request for funding are subject to approval by the Early Response Technical Review Committee to ensure compliance within acceptable standards and for confirmation of funding availability/eligibility.
- Once a decision has been made, you will receive written confirmation of that decision. If your project is approved, you may complete the work. The proposed project that has been approved must be completed, with final documentation submitted to the program administrator no later than December 31, 2012 or at a date specified by the Early Response Technical Review Committee.
- Following completion of the work, the applicant is responsible for submitting all required documentation. A staff member will visit your property to ensure project completion. Septic system documentation includes copies of all permits and paid invoices.
- A cheque will then be mailed to your attention. The program administrator is not responsible for making payments directly to industry professionals hired by the applicant.
- If an applicant is unsatisfied with the decision of the Review Committee, they may appeal the decision to the Project Manager. The Notice of Appeal must be submitted in writing within one month of the original decision. The Project Manager will collect all relevant information and the applicant's appeal will be heard by the Management Committee of the Saugeen, Grey Sauble, Northern Bruce Peninsula Source Protection Region.

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Terms & Conditions

- Septic projects that have recently been completed will be eligible to apply for funding as long as the proposed work was started on or after December 1, 2010.
- Advanced septic systems have an additional treatment step. Some common advanced systems are EcoFlo, Aquarobic and Waterloo Biofilter. Using manufactured filter sand in a leaching bed does not denote an advanced system as no extra treatment step is in place.
- Funding provided from additional programs/projects, such as the Canada-Ontario Farm Stewardship Program (EFP) and conservation authority programs, will be reviewed by the program administrators to determine the applicable grant rate. The applicant must declare to the program administrators any funding from other projects and programs.
- Septic inspections are eligible for funding. However, if the results of the inspection reveal the septic to be faulty, the inspection costs will only be covered if the identified problem with the septic system is corrected. Upgrades and repairs recommended through the septic inspection are also eligible for funding.
- If your project is on rented/leased land, you will need to submit a letter from the property owner with your application form indicating that the owner approves of the proposed project.
- The applicant will be responsible for all payments. Grants are provided to reimburse paid and receipted expenses.
- The applicant will be responsible for hiring qualified industry professionals (i.e., those that meet the qualifications specified in all applicable regulations).
- The septic system has to be constructed, repaired or installed by a person or company that is qualified or registered under Section 18.1 of the *Building Code Act* and Section 2.12 of the Ontario Building Code. Failure to hire licensed professionals may result in non-payment of the project. Any septic system that is in violation of these codes may be reported to the local Chief Building Official or Public Health.
- These volunteer projects address a potential risk to drinking water sources. The Source Protection Plans, expected to be finalised in 2012 on a region-by-region basis, will determine the measures necessary to protect wellheads and surface water intakes. Therefore, completing Early Response projects, such as upgrading or repairing a septic system, does not exempt the property owner from implementing additional practices that may be required by a local Source Protection Plan.
- PERMITS: Please note Drinking Water Source Protection does not provide or issue permits. Landowners must satisfy all applicable laws related to the project including pursuing and applying for approvals and permits that may be required from other agencies, including conservation authorities, prior to undertaking the work proposed. Drinking Water Source Protection may verify that proper guidelines are being followed, which includes the issuing of permits and approvals, by contacting the appropriate agencies. Failure to obtain all required permits and approvals will result in non-payment of the project.

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Early Response Technical Review Committee Directives & Guidelines

- Program funds will be assigned to projects with the greatest potential to improve and protect surface and/or groundwater quality.
- The Committee may defer or deny projects that are considered to be a lower priority for water quality improvement.
- The Committee will assess each project on its own merits and assess its impact on water quality relative to other funding requests.
- It will be necessary for the Committee to prioritize projects based on their impact in order to maximize the benefits derived from available funds.
- The Committee may decide at any time to fund an application at a grant rate or grant ceiling that is lower than the published maximum rate or ceiling. This decision may be made based on availability of funds, potential of the project to improve water quality or funding allocated to similar projects.
- In the interest of improving water quality or meeting the objectives of the Early Response Program, the Committee may place conditions or requirements on the proposed project in addition to the published guidelines. These conditions must be met by the applicant before the grant is issued.
- The Committee may pass along property information to Public Health, the local municipality or the Spills Action Centre if the septic system appears to be in violation of any current regulations.

Caring For Your Septic System

*The following information is for information purposes only.
Please see the Ontario Building Code for specific regulatory requirements.*

Septic systems are the responsibility of the homeowner. Your septic system requires regular maintenance to run smoothly. By maintaining your system, you are protecting human health and the environment. Regular maintenance will extend the life of your system, which saves you money in the long run. A failed septic system will inadequately treat sewage and may cause groundwater contamination as the pollutants leach into the groundwater. Human health and drinking water could be threatened if pollutants reach nearby wells.

- Septic systems should be pumped out and inspected every 3-5 years or when the sludge and scum occupy 1/3 of the working capacity of the tank, regardless of whether it services a permanent home or a summer cottage. If you are not following this requirement, your septic system cannot function properly. If your system has never been pumped and you think that it is functioning correctly, you may be incorrect; the solids are entering the leaching bed, which increases soil clogging and may reduce the life expectancy of your septic system.
- The typical lifespan of a septic system may range from 15 to 25 years. Regular maintenance can maximize the lifespan of your system.

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- It is not recommended that you attempt to repair the septic system yourself. It is recommended that you hire a licensed septic contractor and obtain the required permits. Keep all maintenance records.
- Use water-conservation plumbing fixtures and conserve water to avoid overloading your septic system with more wastewater than it was designed to accept. This will maximize the efficiency and life span of your septic system.
- Divert surface water runoff away from the system.
- Do not drive over or park on the leaching bed. Heavy objects, including patios, tool sheds or decks, should not be constructed on your septic system. These practices can compact the soil in your bed and the water will not drain properly. This can damage the tiles within the leaching bed and cause the system to malfunction or fail.
- Proper vegetation cover is essential to prevent soil erosion, provide insulation, protect the system from freezing, and ensure your septic system will continue to work properly.
 - Start planting on a new leaching bed right away to avoid soil erosion, but do not exceed maximum burial depths of the Ontario Building Code. Consult your local building official for details.
 - Grasses, wildflowers and shallow rooted native plants are a good choice as their roots won't damage the pipes and they require little maintenance. After planting, water the new grass seed or plants only once. They will draw moisture and nutrients from the ground.
 - Choose vegetation that prefers dry soil and requires no additional watering as extra water can reduce the system's function. Do not add excess water!
 - Mulch and pavement do not allow the bed to breathe, this disrupts its function.
 - Deep rooted plants can clog and harm the pipes in the leaching bed. Trees and shrubs should be planted far away from your system. Different tree species with invasive, moisture-seeking roots should be located further away from your septic system.
 - Vegetable plants will not protect the system from soil erosion.
 - Native plants have already adapted to their surrounding environment, which means less maintenance. Avoid planting "invasive plant species". To find out the best plants for your area: Native Plant Database www.evergreen.ca.
 - You can cut the grass on the leaching bed, but let the grass grow before winter to provide insulation for the system and prevent the system from freezing.
- No studies have shown that water softeners have any measurable effect on the performance of septic systems. However, the system should be designed to accept the additional load that a softener produces. Too much salt in your septic tank can decrease bacterial action. It is recommended that water softener discharge into a grey-water pit; for more information on grey-water pits, contact your local Public Health Unit. If you have a water softener that is discharging to your septic system:
 - Set the softener to regenerate based on water flow not regular time intervals.

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- Use a more efficient water softener to reduce the amount of salt used. New water softeners are generally more efficient than older models.
 - Water conservation will reduce the amount of salt going to the system.
 - Soften only the water necessary (i.e. water used for outdoor purposes does not need to be softened).
 - Potassium chloride can be used instead of sodium chloride (table salt) in the softener. It is more costly but does not cause as much degradation to soil permeability and it will fertilize plants over the leaching bed.
- The only thing that should be “added” to your septic system is household wastewater. Many additives claim to enhance the performance of your system, guarantee less frequent pump-outs or even repair your system. These products are unnecessary, expensive and may actually shorten the life of your system! There is no evidence that supports the effectiveness of any chemical treatment. Most engineers and sanitation professionals believe that these products are unnecessary and potentially harmful to the system. Additives are not substitutes for proper care and maintenance. There is no magical potion to sure an ailing system. Some examples:
- Starters are advertised to get the system going after the tank has been pumped out or when opening the cottage; essentially the product is bacteria in a bottle. Your system naturally yields enough bacteria to work properly.
 - Feeders claim to provide food for bacteria by adding yeast or other biological products. This is also true for old septic system remedies such as liver, beer, yeast, or raw chicken. The wastewater is the only food the bacteria needs.
 - Some cleaners use the slogan “never pump your tank again”. These products break down the sludge in the tank so it will exit the tank and flow to the leaching bed. The liquefied sludge can return to a solid form in the leaching bed and plug up the tiles. Wastewater will not be properly treated and your system may back up. The purpose of a septic tank is to allow the scum to float to the top and the solids to settle on the bottom, leaving only the clear effluent to flow to the leaching bed. The solids are supposed to be in the tank! The breakdown of sludge in the septic tank is a natural process which does not need any help from chemicals. Encouraging homeowners not to pump out their tanks can have disastrous long term effects!
- Waterfront properties generally have wetter soils and a high groundwater table, which can be challenging for a septic system. This can decrease the efficiency of your system and allow harmful pollutants to get into groundwater and nearby water bodies. Get your tank pumped out regularly to keep your septic system operating efficiently.
- Septic systems are not garbage cans! They are designed to treat household wastewater. What you flush or put down the drain will have a major impact on how well your system works. Septic systems rely on naturally occurring bacteria to break down organic materials. Even small amounts of household products can kill the good, helpful bacteria and leave nothing to break down the solid waste. Some tips to keep the essential bacteria alive and digesting:

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- Limit usage of anti-bacterial soaps and detergents because they are designed to kill or inhibit bacterial action.
 - Garbage disposals can increase the solids in your septic tank by 50%, meaning your tank will have to be pumped out more frequently. Eliminating garbage disposals would reduce the grease and solids entering the leaching bed. If you cannot live without your garbage disposal, ensure you pump your tank annually.
 - Don't pour harmful chemicals down the drain (e.g. bleach, drain cleaner, paint, paint thinner, nail polish remover, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, toilet bowl cleaner, etc.). Take these items to your local hazardous waste site.
 - Don't use more soap or detergents than necessary.
 - Products that do not break down naturally or that take a long time to break down should not go down the drain. They can clog pipes, fill the septic tank up more quickly and decrease the overall effectiveness of the system. Soap and detergent scum can also plug the soil pores, which could cause system failure. Some examples are: baby wipes, cat litter, cigarette butts, coffee grinds, condoms, dental floss, diapers, fat, grease, kitchen scraps, paper towels, feminine hygiene products. These items can be composted or thrown out.
- There are required provincial minimum distances for various structures around septic systems. These distances are:
- your distribution pipe and leaching bed must be 5 m from a pool, deck, garden, building, or shed
 - your distribution pipe must be 3 m from any lot lines
 - your septic tank must be 1.5 m from your house
 - your septic tank and distribution pipe must be 15 m from any wells with water-tight casing and 30 m from any wells without water-tight casing (this includes your neighbour's well)

Access to Information & Privacy

All information collected through the Early Response application process will be used for the purpose of determining cost-share grants under the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program. This includes, but is not limited to, information contained in application forms, notes, diagrams, videotapes, correspondence, meeting minutes, documents, reports, and photographs. Information from deferred, denied or un-reviewed project applications will be treated as confidential. However, all information collected for the purposes of application for funds through the Early Response Program is subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and may be subject to disclosure under that Act. Project information from approved projects may be made public for the purposes of promotion or reporting.

This program has received funding support from the Government of Ontario. Such support does not indicate endorsement by the Government of Ontario of the contents of this material.

Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program – Early Response Application Form – Septic Systems



Application # _____
(for office use only)

Applicant Information

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Phone (alternate): _____

Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Town: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

Property Information

Address of project location (if different from above): _____

Municipality: _____ Lot: _____ Con: _____

Roll Number: _____

UTM (GPS) coordinates (if known): _____

Watershed: Grey Sauble Saugeen Northern Bruce Peninsula

Land Use: Residence Business Cottage Institutional Industrial

Other (please specify) _____

If you have a watercourse or water body on your property, please provide the name and proximity to

project location: _____

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Project Agreement

1. I/we have read, understood and agree to the project guidelines and the terms of funding assistance for the Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program Early Response Program.
2. I/we have completed this application in full and I/we certify that the information contained in this application and any supporting documentation is true and complete to the best of my/our knowledge.
3. I/we understand that I/we are responsible for reporting any grant income to Canada Revenue Agency.
4. I/we understand that failure to comply with all the program requirements may delay processing of the application or render me/us ineligible for financial assistance.
5. I/we understand that I/we will be responsible for ensuring the technical and structural adequacy and legal requirements of this project.
6. I/we have included an inspection report and two quotes.
7. I/we are the owners of the mentioned property or have included a letter of permission from the property owner.
8. I/we agree to obtain all necessary permits and approvals from applicable agencies, which may include local municipalities, public health units and conservation authorities.
9. I/we agree to provide documentation regarding other grants related to this project.

Signature of Applicant(s)

Date

I, _____, (*signature of applicant*) hereby declare that I will not receive more than 100 percent of the total cost of this project.

NOTE: All information collected on this application form is subject to the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA). Information may be provided to the Ministry of the Environment as the funding agent of this program.

NOTE: Incomplete applications will delay the approval process. Please ensure applications are complete before submission.

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Application # _____
(for office use only)

Current Conditions

1. Do you use a septic tank? Yes No
 - a. How large is your septic tank (capacity)? _____ L or gal (circle one)
 - b. How old is your septic tank? _____ year(s) old
 - c. Was a permit issued for the installation of the current septic system? Yes No
(if yes, please provide a copy)
 - d. Does all water/sewage run into the septic system? Yes No
If no, please explain: _____
 - e. What is your septic tank made of? Steel Concrete Don't know
 - f. How many compartments are in your septic tank? 1 2 Don't know
 - g. How far is your septic tank from:
 - i. the nearest surface water source (e.g., lake, river, stream, ditch)? _____ metres
 - ii. the nearest groundwater source (e.g., private well, municipal well)? _____ metres
 - h. When was the last time your tank was pumped? _____ year(s) ago
 - i. When was your system inspected? _____ year(s) ago
2. Do you use a tile bed / leaching bed? Yes No
 - a. How old is your tile bed? _____ year(s) old
 - b. How many lines are in your tile bed? _____ lines
 - c. How long is each line in your tile bed? _____ metres
 - d. How far is the edge of your tile bed from:
 - i. a drainage line? _____ metres
 - ii. an open drain or stream? _____ metres
3. Do you use another type of system? (e.g., outhouse, cesspool, etc.): _____ Yes No
4. Why is this system being replaced or upgraded? (check any or all that apply)

<input type="checkbox"/> Malfunction	<input type="checkbox"/> Failure of holding tank
<input type="checkbox"/> Failure of leaching bed	<input type="checkbox"/> Connection to municipal system
<input type="checkbox"/> Other – please specify _____	

Please explain: _____

Ontario Drinking Water Stewardship Program – Early Response Application Form – Septic Systems

Proposed Project & Estimated Costs

Please provide a description of the current circumstances:

Threat to be addressed: Threat #2 – Septics Risk Management Measure Number: _____

Please describe the project:

Proposed start date: _____ Proposed completion date: _____

Please list all project components and their associated costs.

	Estimated Cost
<input type="checkbox"/> Replace both septic tank and leaching bed	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Replace septic tank and/or holding tank only	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Replace leaching bed only	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Pump and inspect septic tank	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Decommission septic system	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Add plumbing connections/pump to transfer wastewater to septic tank and/or leaching bed	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Connect to a municipal sewer line & decommission existing septic system	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> _____	\$

Total Estimated Costs: \$ _____

Are you currently receiving or applying for additional funding for the project? Yes No

If yes, please indicate the name of the program/project, and to whom you are applying/have applied in order for Drinking Water Source Protection to verify amounts received:

If yes, documentation will be required to provide proof of grants received.

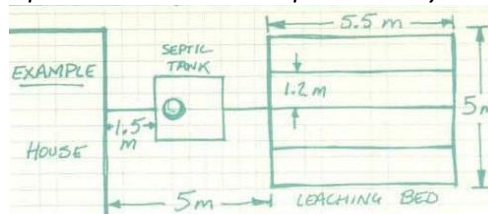
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Site Plan

Please use the grid below to provide a sketch of the proposed project site. Please mark directional north, as well as the following (include distances between wells, structures, septic systems, water courses, etc):

- Location of abandoned and/or existing water wells and septic systems
- Location of field tiles and catch basins
- Location of proposed work (inspections and upgrades)
- Indicate type of well: dug water wells ▼ drilled water wells ■
- Roadway/access routes
- Surface water features (streams, pond, wetlands)
- Location of municipal drinking water service line/trunk line and sewer line
- General topography (even and level, hilly, steep, depression)
- Septic system distance from wells and building structures
- Location of all building(s): mark those serviced by the existing septic system and water wells

NOTE: Illustrations from compliance records or use permits may be submitted.



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