

# SEPTIC TANK

## How the tank works

The contents of the septic tank stratify into three layers:

- Floating Scum Layer - soaps, greases, toilet paper, etc.
- Liquid layer - water, other liquids, and suspended solids
- Sludge - heavy organic and inorganic materials settle to the bottom of the tank.

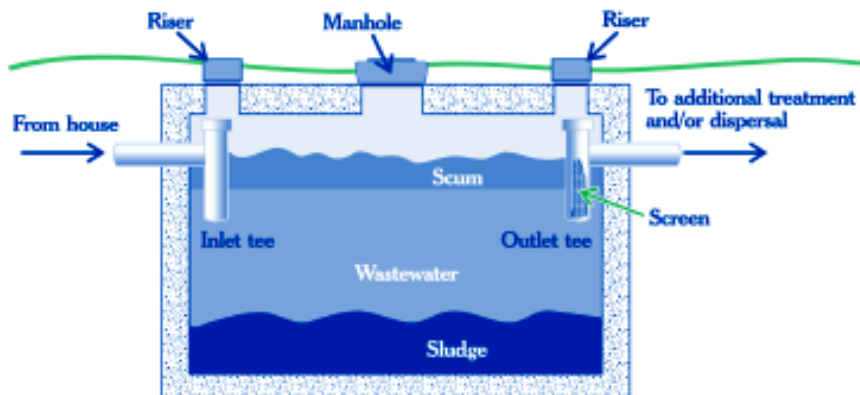
Bacteria that naturally occur in the sewage which enters the tank are necessary to break down organic materials in wastewater. This is often referred to as primary treatment. Pathogens in the waste are not destroyed in the septic tank. The septic tank and its bacteria prepare the wastewater for treatment by the remainder of your system.

## Components of the tank

The septic tank performs the first step of the wastewater treatment process. The septic tank is a solid watertight tank designed specifically to accept all wastewater from the home. Some installations may have one tank or two tanks in series. All tanks should feature inlet and outlet baffles, along with an access manhole for cleaning.

The inlet baffle ensures that entering wastewater mixes with the liquid contents of the tank to begin bacterial breakdown of organic materials and separation of solids. The inlet baffle also prevents the floating scum layer from floating back and clogging the inlet pipe.

The outlet baffle ensures that only liquid is able to leave the tank and enter the secondary treatment portion of your system. If the scum layer reaches the outlet pipe, the pipe would quickly become plugged.



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