SepticSmart Do's and Don'ts for an Advanced Treatment Unit (ATU)

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

What is an ATU?

Advanced Treatment Units (ATUs), referred here to as an individual residential system, are small biological treatment systems used to treat wastewater to a higher degree than a traditional septic system.

Why would I need or want an ATU versus a traditional septic system?

ATUs are used in many states to achieve a higher-quality wastewater than what exits traditional septic tanks. In fact, they are necessary in some areas — either because of the sensitivity of the environment, or because of site conditions. ATUs are also designed to reduce nutrient loadings, whereas traditional septic systems are not.

What is the required maintenance?

As with all septic systems, an ATU's proper functioning relies on regular maintenance. Due to its advanced components, an ATU needs more maintenance than a traditional septic system.

To ensure proper functioning, most states require annual operation, maintenance, monitoring and reporting as a requirement of the homeowner's septic permit. A maintenance provider should perform these services. Contact the ATU manufacturer for information on maintenance providers. The ATU manufacturer trains maintenance providers to assure they are familiar with the manufacturer's treatment system.

In addition to the *Do's and Don'ts of Septic Systems*, ATUs have some additional do's and don'ts because of their advanced parts.

Follow Septic Sam's ATU do's and don'ts:

Don't:

- Turn off any air supply device, alarm or electrical component of the system.
- Bypass the system.
- Modify, cover or move any system components without prior approval from the service provider.
- Pump the ATU without service provider approval or supervision.

Do:

- Use soaps and detergents that are low-suds, biodegradable, and low- or phosphate-free.
- Fix leaky fixtures.
- Use low-flow fixtures.
- Dispose of unused medications in the garbage.
- Substitute liquid fabric softener with dryer sheets.

For more SepticSmart tips, visit **www.epa.gov/septicsmart**

EPA EPA-832-F-14-008 • September 2014