

Be sure to hire OOWA professionals to design, install, pump or service your onsite sewage system.

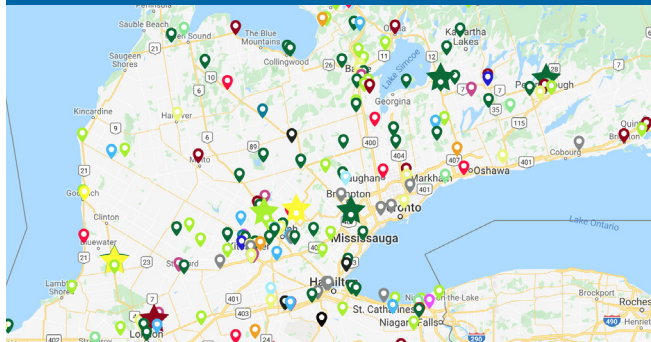
What to look for when hiring an onsite wastewater practitioner:

- Are they an OOWA Member?*
- Are they licensed? Be sure to ask for their BCIN (Building Code Identification Number).
- Are they going to get a permit?
- Have you checked their references?
- Is the quote comprehensive and detailed?

Remember, the cheapest doesn't always mean the best!

**Why is this important? OOWA is the voice of onsite and decentralized wastewater experts in Ontario. OOWA provides training and skills development opportunities in addition to current industry best practice resources for our members.

Find OOWA members on our member directory at www.oowa.org/business-directory-map/



TIP

The Ontario Building Code mandates that tanks be pumped when scum and sludge levels occupy 1/3 of the tank's capacity. Get to know your usage by talking to your pumper and then pump as required.

Why is maintaining your sewage system so important?

Properly functioning onsite sewage systems can increase the value of your home, prevent costly repairs, stop raw effluent and excessive nutrients from leaching into our waterways and help prevent contamination of aquifers - your source of drinking water!



Clogged effluent filters can lead to sewage back ups.



Have your effluent filter checked and cleaned regularly.



Tank risers ensure safety and accessibility for servicing.



Landscape so that the risers are easily found and accessible.

Photos courtesy of Polylok and R.J. Burnside & Associates

TIP

When buying a house, make sure to ask for the past and present sewage system records, including any maintenance or pump out receipts/reports that have been done. A new sewage system is a major financial investment, so be sure to take that into consideration when purchasing a home.

www.oowa.org

ESTABLISHED IN 1999

Ontario Onsite Wastewater Association

A Homeowner's Guide to a Healthy Sewage (Septic) System



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Important first steps for installing a sewage system

1. Have a professional help you with your application.
Qualified installers and designers can be found on OOWA's member directory.
2. Who has permitting authority?
Call your local municipality or district and ask. Also find out if there are any special requirements for your property.
3. Get a sewage system application form
As provided by your principal authority.
4. Make sure you have all the required information ready.
These will be stated on your application form.

What you should NOT put into your sewage system:

- Anti-bacterial soaps
- Automatic toilet bowl cleaners
- "Flushable" wipes or other sanitary products
- Liquid fabric softeners
- Harsh chemicals
- Food scraps and coffee grounds
- Oils/grease/fats
- Drain de-cloggers
- Pharmaceuticals

Remember to only use natural and biodegradable cleaning products!

Sewage System DO's

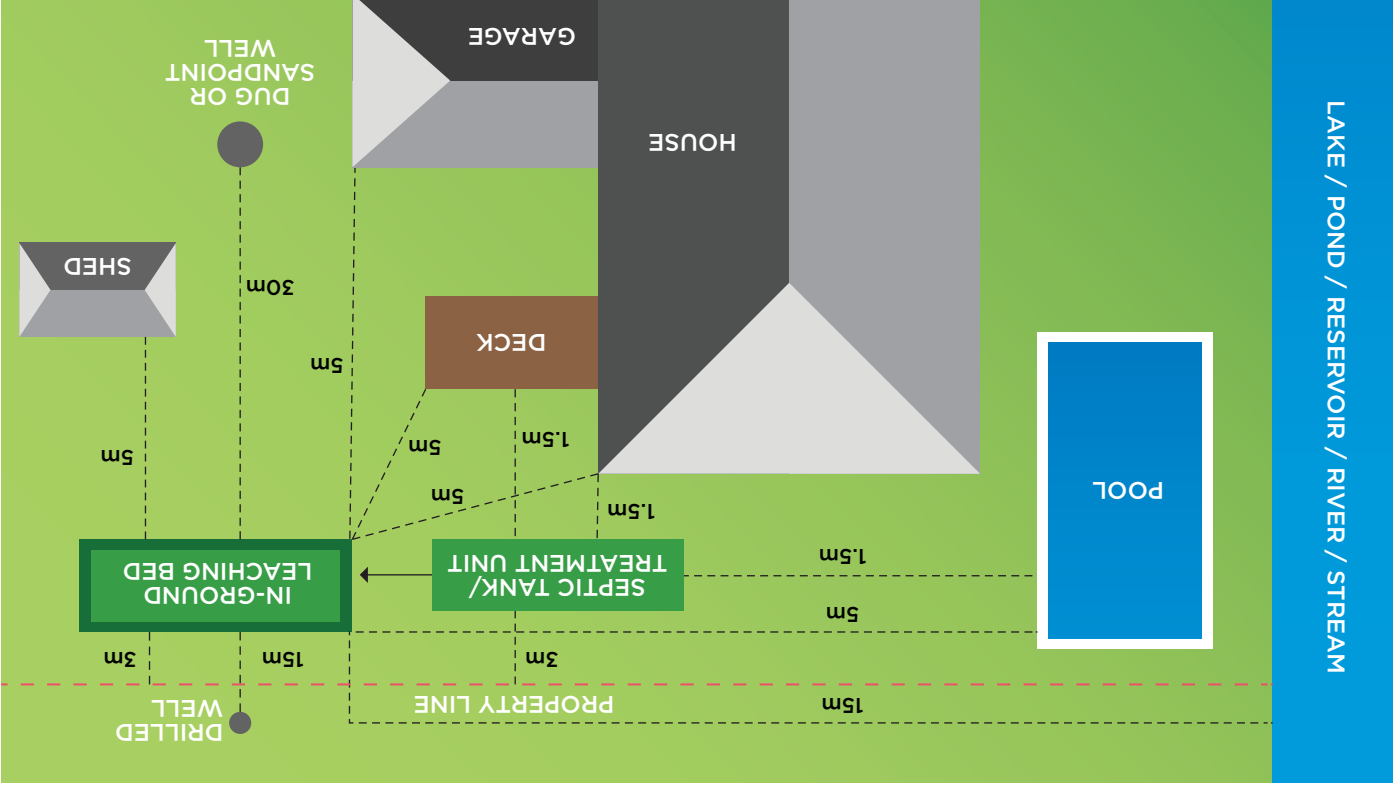
- Do keep accurate records of maintenance, pump outs and service calls
- Do keep a system diagram for reference
- Do repair leaky plumbing fixtures
- Do replace old toilets with low-flush models
- Do install an effluent filter in your septic tank to protect your leaching bed and to ensure you are in compliance with the Ontario Building Code
- Do keep the access lids easily accessible and securely fastened
- Do ensure that your home insurance policy includes a sewage back-up rider
- Do ensure that the leaching bed has good erosion control on it post installation (grass)
- Do ensure all contractors know the location of your leaching bed, get the required utility locates done and ensure that any landscaping does not impact the bed

Sewage System DON'TS

- Don't allow vehicles to drive over or park on the leaching bed
- Don't build skating rinks or above ground pools on it
- Don't dig without knowing the location of your sewage system
- Don't plant any trees or shrubs on or near the bed; their roots can clog pipes
- Don't drain downspouts, sump pumps, etc. down or near the tanks or leaching bed
- Don't build over the tank or leaching bed with a hard surface such as asphalt, brick or patio stones
- Don't excessively water the lawn over the leaching bed
- Don't use a garbage disposal/garburator

TIP

Onsite sewage systems should last between 20-30 years or longer if properly maintained. To make sure yours is functioning properly, call your local licensed wastewater professional.



Notes:

1. The distances shown in this plan are minimum requirements from the Ontario Building Code.
2. Set backs may need to be increased depending on site conditions and the type of system.
3. If the distances on this plan cannot be met, you can propose an "alternate solution" that will be considered by the agency reviewing your sewage system application.