Protecting Septic Systems
Over The Holidays

By WCOWMA Staff

It's the most wonderful time of the year. . . except for the septic system. The holidays provide families and friends a great opportunity to come together, celebrate and reconnect. This celebrating usually involves extra cooking, cleaning, bathing and clothes washing. This can put significant strain on the septic system.

Guests from the city may not understand the risks to flushing the wrong things into the septic tank or that heavier than normal water usage can have a negative impact. A chat with houseguests on what not to do can help avoid a costly repair.

Let's not all bathe at once – Try to avoid having the dishwasher and washing machine running while everyone is getting in their morning shower. Running the dishwasher and the washing machine later in the evening or even over night can help avoid hydraulic overload of the septic system.

Do preventive maintenance – Septic systems require maintenance. A maintenance inspection prior to the holiday season can help avoid that panicked call to a contractor on Christmas Day and the attendant extra charges for an emergency visit. A maintenance inspection will confirm proper functioning of the pump and other electronics as well as reveal if the tank needs to be pumped out.

Don't flush anything but human waste and toilet paper –

Filling up your tank with organics such as food waste either by flushing or running it through a garbage grinder cause strain on your tank. The organics will build up in the tank and cause a need for more frequent pumping.

Just because something is marketed as flushable doesn't mean it should be flushed. The following items do not belong in the septic tank: feminine hygiene products, wipes of any kind, condoms, and anything else that is not human waste or toilet paper.

Making sure you understand how to take care of your septic system might save you an expensive emergency call out over the holidays.

Western Canada Onsite Wastewater Management Association