

**PROPER OPERATION, MAINTENANCE AND SERVICING**  
**OF**  
**AEROBIC WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS**  
**INTRODUCTION**

**It has become increasingly clear in recent years that the proper operation, maintenance and servicing of ALL onsite systems is crucial to production of safe and acceptable effluents to protect human health and the environment.**

**Aerobic Wastewater Treatment Systems are one type of alternative onsite treatment method. Individual aerobic systems, which are properly designed, installed, operated and maintained, are capable of producing extremely high quality effluent.**

**All systems of this type work by using the bacteria that nature has provided. The bacterium in your system is alive and if you abuse your system by putting harmful agents down your drain, the bacteria will die. These are living beings (bacteria) in your system and if you kill them off by putting chemicals, etc., then your system will not work and will eventually turn into just a septic tank. By introducing air into the system, the bacteria grow and thrive in much larger amounts than would occur naturally. The overpopulation of bacteria speeds up the process of breaking down domestic wastewater, making it safe for release into the environment. With the mosquito problems in Louisiana, mainly encephalitis and the West Nile Virus, it is crucial that ALL systems work properly. If there is a system in your neighborhood that is not working properly and is causing a mosquito problem, please call your Health Department. REMEMBER: CLEAN WATER DOES NOT SMELL.**

### **Operation, Maintenance, and Servicing of Aerobic Treatment Units**

**All onsite wastewater treatment systems require some level of maintenance. Even though the physical and biological processes occur automatically in an aerobic treatment unit, it is important that both operation and maintenance requirements are followed to ensure the aerobic treatment units perform to their capabilities. The user's point of view should be that nothing that cannot be ingested by the user should be disposed into the system. Items OTHER THAN toilet paper and mild detergents should not be put in the system.**

**One distinct difference between an aerobic onsite system and other types of alternative systems (septic tanks) is, that homeowner abuse reveals itself much sooner producing a "warning" that the system is malfunctioning. This "warning,"**

usually in the form of an odor or alarm indicator, allows a timely response to the problem rather than waiting for a complete failure to occur. In this way a quick response insures correction before a danger to human health or the environment can occur. It is the homeowners responsibility to “police” what is going into your system so that your system and equipment will not be damaged from abuse.

**THE FOLLOWING “DO’S AND DON’TS” SHOULD BE PRACTICED BY THE HOMEOWNER:**

**Do not dispose of grease, fats, and oils in the system.**

**Do not dispose of pesticides, herbicides, or any other toxins in the system.**

**The garbage disposal should be used sparingly. Food waste, grease, etc., should be disposed of in the solid waste bin. Food waste represents additional loading of the aerobic treatment unit and would have to digest, increasing pump out intervals. Do not dispose of citrus products (oranges, lemons, grapefruit) or cantaloupe, watermelon, etc. Seeds will stop up your sprinkler heads.**

**Do not dispose of paints, household chemicals, automobile fluids, or discard mop water into the system.**

**NEVER dispose of items such as lint, cooking grease, scouring pads, diapers, sanitary napkins, tampons, feminine hygiene products, condoms, hair, coffee grounds, paper towels, bandages, cotton balls, cotton swabs, cleaning rags, dental floss, strings, cigarette butts, rubber or plastic products, paints and thinning agents, drain cleaners or other harsh chemicals in the system. Do not wash shag rugs, the strings will damage your aerator shaft.**

**Do not use toilet tank drop ins.**

**Do not use swimming pool chlorine tablets if you are chlorinating. These tablets will harm your equipment and kill your grass. We have the chlorine tablets that are specifically for wastewater treatment systems. EPA DOES NOT ALLOW THE USE OF SWIMMING POOL TABLETS.**

**Do not use additives for septic systems, such as Rid-X - these will harm your system. We have found that Rid-X will cause your flowers and trees to die when this water is sprayed on them from your sprinkler lines. Also, people are selling products door-to-door and by telemarketing stating that it is good for aerobic systems. This is false and they should not be put in the system. If you are contacted by anyone doing this, you can call your Better Business Bureau to find out if there have been complaints against them. There is a liquid bacteria that we carry that is made especially for these systems. We**

also carry a product for grease build-up in your pipes. We are a member, in good standing, of the Better Business Bureau.

**Do not connect other water sources to the system to prevent a hydraulic overload.**

**Do not dispose of home brewery waste - strong medicines, antibiotics. Anti-bacterial soaps should be avoided.**

**Do not use strong disinfectants or bleaches or cleaning products such as: Lysol, Pine-Sol, Tidy Bowl, Drano or discharge from water softeners. These should all be avoided. Recommended detergents are low-sudsing, low phosphates and biodegradable, with washing soda ingredients. Fabric softener dryer sheets are recommended instead of liquid fabric softener. WE RECOMMEND ARM & HAMMER SOAP, SAM'S CHOICE (WITHOUT BLEACH), WHICH CAN BE PURCHASED AT WAL-MART or Shaklee detergent. Do not use bleach or detergents with bleach. DO NOT USE TIDE, ALL, CHEER OR OTHER HIGH SUDSING DETERGENTS. All Shaklee products are excellent for your system. We are a Shaklee Distributor and will be glad to answer any questions that you might have regarding these products. Oxi-Clean can be used instead of bleach. Recommended cleaning products are non-chlorine, biodegradable, nontoxic and non-corrosive.**

**IMPORTANT: Do not cover your aerator lid (the one with the vent) with dirt. This blocks the air from getting to the aerator and will ruin your aerator. DO NOT PLANT BUSHES ON OR AROUND YOUR SYSTEM. IF OUR SERVICE MAN CANNOT GET TO THE SYSTEM THEN IT WILL NOT BE SERVICED. ALSO, IT CANNOT BE PUMPED OUT IF THERE ARE BUSHES IN THE WAY. Make sure that you poison for fire ants around your system. These ants will destroy your wiring and will be very costly to repair and replace. Check the fresh air openings in each vented cover monthly to make sure the passage of air into the tank has not been restricted. Check your control box daily to make sure the red light is not on, which indicates that there is a problem with the system. The new control boxes have an audible alarm to alert the homeowner that there is a problem. Please check with Dean's Septic Systems if you are interested in one of these control boxes.**

**If you take large amounts of antibiotics, this can affect your system through your body waste. NEVER dispose of iodine, old medications, gauze, Band-Aids, tape, cotton balls, Q-Tips, etc. in your system.**

**If you have a darkroom in your home for developing film, NEVER discard the chemicals into your system .**

**Have your system pumped out every 3 - 5 years. Again, do not put bushes around your system. Make sure that the pretreatment chamber is pumped out. The**

**pumping company will have to dig up the plug for this chamber. If you do not see them digging this up, please advise them to do so.**

**Repair any leaking faucets or toilets so that they will not flood your system.**

**Divert down spouts and other surface water away from your system.**

**NEVER connect roofing down spouts, footer drains, sump pump piping or garage and basement floor drains into the sewer line of the system.**

**NEVER allow backwash liquid from a water softener to enter the system.**

**NEVER use the power supply to the aerator as a service receptacle for lawn and garden tools.**

**NEVER interrupt power to the control box, even during extended periods of non-use. If you anticipate a long term vacancy, contact the local distributor for proper procedures. If your sprinklers are not working this could mean that your pump is not working. If you do not see your sprinklers working, check the main breaker box for your house to see if the breaker for the septic system is tripped**

**If your aerator trips the button on the control box the red light will come on. If it does this three times, it is time to analyze to find the problem. It is the homeowners responsibility to make sure that the aerator does not get under water. If the aerator gets under water it voids all warranties. When the aerator is checked at our shop, we can always tell if it has been under water. Check your control box daily to make sure that the red light is not on. We do have audible control boxes if you are interested.**

**\*\*\*\*\* IMPORTANT: PLEASE WATCH FOR SNAKES AND SPIDERS AROUND THE LIDS OF YOUR RISERS. OUR SERVICE MAN HAS HAD MANY CLOSE CALLS WHEN TAKING THE LIDS OFF THE RISERS.**

## **ALTERNATIVE HOUSEHOLD CLEANING SOLUTIONS**

**Many of the ready-made solutions we purchase to clean and maintain our homes contain poisonous or toxic chemicals (see attached list). While the labels on these products contain signal words (caution, warning, danger or poison) to alert us about proper use or potential harm, many do not list the chemical ingredients in the product or hazards associated with the chemical. In most cases, safer alternatives are available. The basic ingredients listed below can be mixed or used alone for many household cleaning tasks. Also, in the event of an accident, these ingredients**

can be identified by most consumers and health care professionals.

### **SELECTED BASIC CLEANING INGREDIENTS**

<b><u>INGREDIENT</u></b>	<b><u>GENERAL USE</u></b>
<b>Baking Soda</b>	<b>Cleaner, deodorized, fire extinguisher, scouring powder</b>
<b>Boiling water</b>	<b>Drain cleaner</b>
<b>Borax*</b>	<b>Cleaner, disinfectant, laundry aid, water softener</b>
<b>Lemon</b>	<b>Cleaner, deodorizer, stain remover</b>
<b>Salt, soap</b>	<b>Cleaner</b>
<b>White vinegar</b>	<b>Cleaner, deodorizer, grease cutter</b>
<b>Washing soda*</b>	<b>Cleaner, laundry aid, grease cutter, stain remover, water softener, disinfectant. It can be found in the laundry section of grocery stores near the dry bleach.</b>

**\* These products are not completely nonpoisonous but are less toxic than their ready-made counterparts.**

**Aerobic wastewater treatment systems are a safe, simple, and a cost-effective method of treating waste onsite. With a small amount of care in the operation and maintenance of the system, aerobic wastewater treatment units will provide extremely high quality effluent and fulfill an important need where conventional systems are not effective. The service provider cannot know what the homeowner is putting in the system, only the homeowner knows that, so please follow these guidelines and your system will work properly. The service provider can always tell when the homeowner is abusing the system but we cannot always pinpoint what the homeowner is putting in their system that is harming it.**

**JUST REMEMBER: CLEAN WATER DOES NOT SMELL.**