

Commerce Offers Winter Season Maintenance Tips for Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems

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MADISON - Owners of private wastewater treatments systems will want to follow seasonal maintenance procedures with winter approaching, Wisconsin Department of Commerce (Commerce) Secretary Dick Leinenkugel announced today.

"Many Wisconsin residents rely on private wastewater treatment systems for waste treatment and disposal," said Leinenkugel. "These maintenance tips can help ensure that these systems function well throughout the winter season."

Recommended maintenance tips are as follows:

- If you live in an area without a natural windbreak, you may want to consider installing a snow fence. If you added a layer of mulch over the area, the snow fence will help keep the mulch in place and will trap snow.
- Spread out your laundry schedule to one warm/hot load per day, year around. Use normal amounts of water---the warmer the better.
- Don't leave water running all the time to prevent freezing. A slow trickle could freeze, while a steady stream could overload the system with water.
- Don't add antifreeze to the system.
- If you will be gone for more than a day or two, have someone visit and use water regularly. If you will be gone for an extended period (weeks or months), pumping the tank before leaving may be a good option, but always consult with a professional before deciding to have a tank pumped.
- Fix any leaky plumbing.
- Keep all vehicles (including ATV's and snowmobiles) and high-traffic people or animal activities off the system, all year.
- Make sure all risers, inspection pipes and manholes have tight covers. Adding insulation is a good idea. Unsecured covers represent a grave danger to children.
- If any seeping or ponding occurs, contact an onsite professional.

Additional information on septic system maintenance can be found at <http://commerce.wi.gov/SB/SB-PowtsOverview.html>.