



Central Michigan District Health Department

Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities



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PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

To: Local Media Outlets
From: Central Michigan District Health Department
RE: CMDHD Promoting SepticSmart Week
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CMDHD is Promoting SepticSmart Week: September 16-20

Central Michigan District Health Department (CMDHD), Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are promoting September 16-20 as SepticSmart Week. This annual event helps educate homeowners and communities on the proper care and maintenance of their septic systems.

More than one-fifth of U.S. households and over half of households in CMDHD's area depend on septic systems to treat their wastewater. These systems handle all the wastewater generated in a house. A typical family of four will create 12,000 gallons of wastewater a month. That's 144,000 gallons a year that must be processed through a septic tank and safely discharged into the soil to prevent contaminating our groundwater and surface waters with bacteria, viruses, and nutrients.

"This week is a great reminder that regular inspections of your septic tank and drainfield can ensure your system is functioning properly and may catch early signs of failure," said Steve King, CMDHD Environmental Health Director. "Having a properly functioning septic system is important for maintaining the health of your family, community, and the environment."

Septic systems are a cost-effective, long-term option for treating wastewater, especially in less populated areas. When properly installed, operated, and maintained, these systems help protect public health, preserve water resources, and support community economic vitality.

The EPA's SepticSmart initiative is a nationwide public education effort. It provides resources to homeowners, local organizations, and government leaders to explain how septic systems work and how to maintain them properly. Some helpful tips to maintain your septic system include:

Please visit us online at www.cmdhd.org.

DO:

- Learn the location of your septic tank and drainfield.
- Have your septic tank pumped by a licensed professional every 3-5 years. Pump your tank before the cold weather makes pumping difficult and more expensive.
- Keep your tank accessible for future maintenance.
- Keep detailed records of pumps and maintenance.
- Conserve water.
- Repair leaking plumbing fixtures, such as toilets.
- Use water efficiently, and stagger water uses throughout the day and week.
- Wash laundry throughout the week, instead of doing it all in one day.

DO NOT:

- Discard harmful chemicals down your drains, such as paints, gasoline, medications, fats, grease, or solids, which can clog drains.
- Flush trash down the toilet, such as diapers, disposable wipes, feminine hygiene products, coffee grounds, cigarette butts, or cat litter.
- Drive, park, or run any machinery over your septic tank and drainfield.

It's easy to forget that a properly operating septic system needs care, too. Proper care and maintenance will extend the life of the system. The ability of a system to treat wastewater can slow down as the system ages or if it has been abused. Remember, your septic system is meant to dispose of and treat gray (sink) water and black (toilet) water. Anything else can harm the system and the groundwater.

SepticSmart Week encourages homeowners, wastewater professionals, and local officials to design and maintain effective systems. These systems promote public health, water conservation, and economic well-being. Be part of the solution by visiting <https://www.epa.gov/septic> for more resources and information.

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon. Visit our website at www.cmdhd.org and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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