

GET PUMPED! LONG ISLAND

Home Wastewater System Owner's Guide: Fact Sheet #2

DETERMINING AND LOCATING YOUR SYSTEM

The first step in maintaining your home wastewater system and saving money is determining the type of system you have and locating it on your property. If you are not on a sewer system, then below are the steps to help you locate your cesspool or septic system:

- 1. Confirm that you have a home wastewater treatment system.** To get a general idea if your home is in a sewer district visit www.GetPumpedLI.org to view a map of the sewered areas. You can also check your property survey or call your local municipality; they may have a copy of the approved building plans for your property. Before calling, it helps to have your Section, Block and Lot number (on your tax bill). Property surveys and building plans (especially older ones) are often incomplete. You may have a home wastewater system even if it is not shown on these records.
- 2. Find your cesspool or septic tank.** Go to the basement and verify which way the wastewater pipe exits through the wall or floor (this pipe is generally the largest diameter pipe, often made of cast iron or plastic). Then, head outside your home to find where the pipe exits. Use a thin (3/8" to 1/2" inch diameter) metal rod as a probe to poke around in the soil 10-15 feet from the house's foundation, moving in the same route as the pipe was headed in the basement. The pipe should get deeper and deeper on a slight downslope as you move further away from the house. Once the tank is sited, you may want to place a marker in the ground to note its location.
- 3. Map the system's location.** To find the system again, make a sketch of your home, garage, and other permanent features (i.e., foundation) with measurements from these landmarks to the center of your cesspool or septic tank cover and to the center of your leaching pit.
- 4. CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG** to make sure there are no buried public utility cables or private irrigation and electric lines that you or a previous homeowner may have installed on your property.
- 5. Still can't find it?** Trained septic professionals can help you find your system by flushing a tracking device down your toilet and tracking it with a meter on the surface. Once they find it they will dig to reveal the components (i.e. access cover, tank's edge). Due to the time spent and specialized equipment used to locate your system this can greatly increase the cost of your first inspection and maintenance.

If your access ports (covers on septic tanks or cesspool rings) are more than six inches below the surface you should consider having "risers" installed to make it easier (and likely cheaper) the next time the tank needs to be inspected and pumped. Your septic company can do this.



For more information please visit: www.GetPumpedLI.org

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