



Our Mission

To improve public health by promoting an individual's well-being, preventing disease, and protecting an individual's health within the community.

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Septic System Awareness: Series 2 of 2

NO GARBAGE GRINDERS

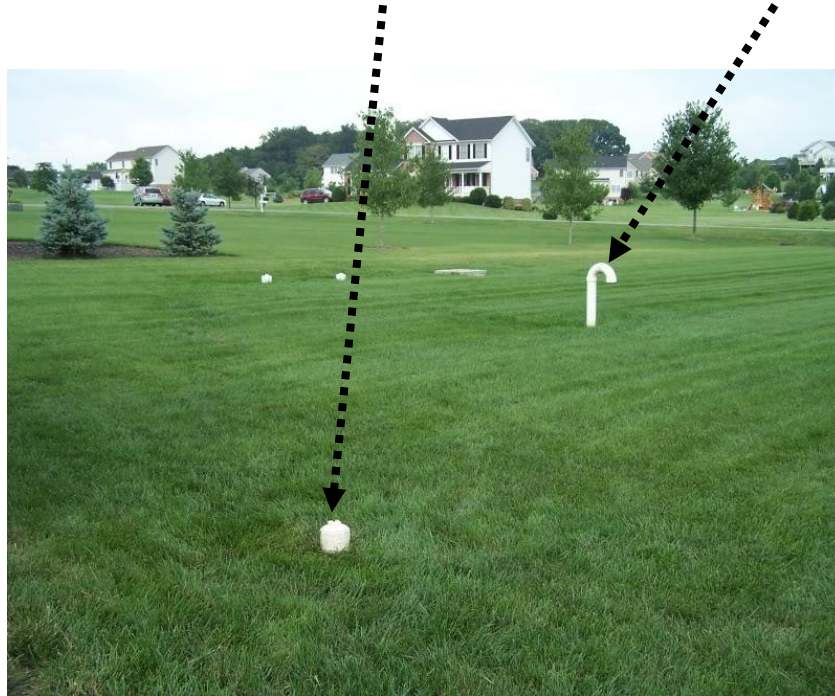
Middleton BOH local regulations prohibit the use of Garbage Grinders within homes that have septic systems (~99% of homes in Middleton have Septic Systems). Garbage grinders "grind" food and other matter in small solids that get flushed down with kitchen sink water to a septic tank. These small solids may get suspended in gas bubbles in ones septic tank and not settle to the bottom with heavier solids as designed. The gas bubbles with the suspended solids may escape through the septic tanks outlet and make way to the leach field. These solids can then start to accumulate on the surface of your leach field and cause premature failure of system as they block pores of the system and slow down the draining capacity of the leach field.



Although stores sell what they call "septic safe" garbage grinders, they are still prohibited in homes with septic systems in Middleton

(See BOH Regulation §339-12: G at <http://ecode360.com/10442136>)

INSPECTION PORTS & SEPTIC VENTS



Inspection Ports

Inspection ports are ports that extend down into your leach field /soil absorption area that can be used in the future to observe the condition and functioning of the system. Some ports are above grade (as seen above) and some are right below the loam. If they are buried (no more than 6" below grade), measurements should be made from the corners of your house or other permanent fixtures in order to locate them.

Vents

In a properly vented septic system, the gas produced in the septic system will move "upstream" through the piping, septic tank, and back through the house plumbing where it will rise up through the house vent (called a roof stack) and disperse into the air on the top of your roof. The State Environmental Code (aka as Title 5) requires an additional vent (as seen above) to be installed on certain sized systems or where systems are placed under a greater amount of fill and/or impervious areas such as paved driveways. Not all systems have vents.

Many vents have carbon filters installed on them that eliminate septic odors that escape at lower elevations (lawn areas). Some vents do not have carbon filters or have ones that need to be replaced over time; therefore, presenting odors that people and neighbors believe may be a failing system which is not always the case.

Many people do not like the look of the traditional candy cane vent on their lawns. Removal of the vents should be avoided so your system can function properly and last to the fullest timeframe. There are decorative vents that can replace the candy cane vent as shown below.



Example of, but not limited to, decorative septic vents.

Outlet Filters (Effluent Screens)



Outlet filters have been a great technological addition to septic tanks. Filters are placed on the outlet tee where wastewater will exit the tank and head to the leach field. Filters act as a last method to help reduce unwanted matter from going to your leach field. The filters have a screen like design that filter out solids as small as 1/16 of an inch and other non degradable objects.

Outlet filters are recommended to be cleaned annually. Filters that become clogged usually present signs when toilets start to flush slowly or water is not draining effectively from household plumbing fixtures. Just think, if the filter was not on, these solids and or objects would have made it to the leach field. Some septic systems don't promote filters (i.e. Presby Systems) so if you have a question on deciding to install one, call the Middleton Health Department for assistance. Filters can be added to new or existing systems and should be done by a licensed septic installer. **NEVER OPEN YOUR SEPTIC TANK COVER AND PUT YOUR HEAD NEAR THE SURFACE OR IN THE TANK, DANGEROUS GASES (METHANE AND HYDROGEN SULFIDE) CAN CAUSE INJURY OR DEATH.**

For detailed information on filters visit:

http://water.epa.gov/scitech/wastetech/upload/2005_07_28_mtb_effluentscreens.pdf

Video on how licensed septic professionals clean a filter: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CC8Vdb2tqcE>