

## Pay Me Now, or Pay Me Later – A Cautionary Tale for Septic Owners!

Every resident of Westbrook owns (or rents) a septic system! Proper care and maintenance of that system is as important as changing the oil in your car. Here's how to avoid costly repairs to your system:

- **PUMP THE TANK EVERY 3 TO 5 YEARS – EVERY 2 YEARS IF YOU HAVE A GARBAGE DISPOSAL OR AN UNDERSIZED SYSTEM. Pumpouts cost about \$300 – new leaching areas cost \$5,000 to \$15,000!**
- **DON'T FLUSH BABY OR PERSONAL WIPES, FEMININE PRODUCTS, FOOD WASTES.**
- **USE GARBAGE DISPOSALS SPARINGLY AND PUMP MORE OFTEN.**
- **FIX RUNNING TOILETS OR OTHER LEAKS!**
- **SPREAD WATER USE THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND WEEK.**

The Westbrook Water Pollution Control Ordinance requires septic tank cleaning at least every five years, but pump more often if recommended above. Newer tanks have outlet filters that **MUST** be cleaned regularly, or they will clog and cause a backup into the house. We do not recommend the use of additives; we do recommend regular maintenance of your system. Malfunctioning septic systems pollute surface and groundwaters, and can contaminate water wells on your neighbor's property or your own.

If you don't know when your system was last pumped, check our computer records at [www.SepticSearch.com](http://www.SepticSearch.com). If there is no record in the computer, come into Town Hall and ask the Land Use staff to check the property file. When you contract with pumpers to maintain your system, remind them to enter pumpouts into the Carmody system – it should be part of their service!

Brochures describing how a septic system works, and how to care for it, are available in the Land Use office at Town Hall. Please do your part to keep Westbrook's wells and waterbodies clean and safe, and prevent an expensive repair down the road!