

# Do's & Don'ts

Please refer to the list below for important information on how to help keep your onsite wastewater treatment system performing as it should.



**ATTENTION COMMERCIAL FOOD FACILITIES:** The wastewater that is produced by your restaurant or food service facility is treated by an onsite wastewater treatment system. It is important to note that most of these same recommended standards and guidance are also important to follow even for those who are connected to a municipal or city sewer treatment system.

## Do

- Know the local rules in your area in regards to onsite wastewater treatment.
- Know exactly what kind of treatment system you have and the location of your system and its components. Check with your local regulatory authority for this information.
- Educate the restaurant staff about your system and the care they need to take as an active user of the system.
- Keep manuals on file for all proprietary devices (ie. Pretreatment devices, pumps, soil dispersal products) used in your system and refer to them for special maintenance or operational requirements.
- Have your onsite system maintained by a qualified professional on a routine basis. (Visit [www.septiclocator.com](http://www.septiclocator.com) to find a professional in your area or check with your local regulator.)
- Notify your professional operator/maintainer if your facility's management personnel changes.
- Scrape dishes and pots/pans and dispose of any food matter that can be reasonably disposed of in the trash or used for compost material.
- Be aware that wastes from the cleaning of the salad bar utensils and containers are a big contributor to the amount of waste your system must treat, so extra care should be taken when cleaning these to get most waste in the trash or composting area.
- Use drain strainers on all drains including floor drains.
- Make sure your dish washers are calibrated and operating correctly and make sure the detergents and sanitizing method are compatible with your system design. If you are unsure check with your maintenance provider or your local regulatory authority.
- Utilize a grease trap or interceptor if your menu contains items that produce grease during cooking or you utilize deep fat fryers.
- Maintain your grease trap/interceptor as needed by pumping or physical cleaning.
- Monitor plumbing fixtures for leaks, particularly toilets and lavatory sinks, and fix any leaks as soon as possible.
- Place signs in the bathrooms notifying patrons not to flush paper towels, wipes, or feminine products down the toilets.
- Consider using a laundry service for linens/towels/aprons.
- Make sure any water conditioning equipment used (softener, etc.) is compatible with the design of your system and the equipment is well maintained by a professional in the water quality industry. Contact the Water Quality Association for a list of qualified professionals [www.wqa.org](http://www.wqa.org).



Do Dispose of Items Properly



## Don't

- Turn off the power to any part of your wastewater treatment system.
- Dispose of excess salad dressings, sauces, grease, soda, alcohol, milk, or juices down the drain.
- Introduce condensate from ice machines, freezers or refrigeration, or HVAC systems to the onsite system.
- Thaw meats using running water as excess water can hurt your systems performance. Plan ahead and defrost foods in the refrigerator or thaw as part of the cooking process.
- Allow non-customer or non-employee use of the restroom facilities unless this type of water use was included in the original design of the system.
- Put industrial anything down the drain. (ie. Drain cleaners, acids)
- Dispose of waste chemicals or paints down the drain. Use toilet tablets or excessive amounts of toilet bowl cleaners.
- Use quaternary ammonia sanitizers in your kitchen or bathroom as they can kill both good and bad bacteria at relatively low concentrations. (The active ingredient on the product will likely include the words "ammonium chloride".) Use of oxidative sanitizers like bleach or Iodine is recommended over quaternary ammonia.
- Use degreasers except in spray and wipe applications (disposal of the wipe is in the trash). Degreasers can emulsify grease and push it out of your grease trap/interceptor.
- Use any additives made for septic tanks/systems or grease traps/interceptors without the approval of your regulatory agency and any proprietary device manufacturer(s) that have a component in your system.

In addition to these recommended standards and guidance, all required system maintenance must be completed in a timely manner by a qualified professional. NOWRA also recommends that your design be reviewed by a qualified professional in your area to determine if the system has been designed to properly treat the wastewater produced at your facility. To find a qualified professional you can visit [www.septiclocator.com](http://www.septiclocator.com) or talk to your local regulatory authority.



**NOWRA**  
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Recycling Association

[www.nowra.org](http://www.nowra.org)  
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Your Local Service Provider Is: