



## PLANNING & ZONING

### PRESS RELEASE

With the fall season here and winter fast approaching, it's a good time to stop thinking about preparing for it and actually prepare! One of the things homeowners with septic systems need to do, is take measures to help ensure your system doesn't freeze.

Here are some precautions and recommendations:

- Tanks should be pumped in the spring or the summer. Waiting until later in the fall or winter doesn't give the bacteria in your tank time to rejuvenate and create the heat that keeps the tank unthawed and this may cause freezing later in the season.
- Stop mowing the grass over the drainfield in early fall. Let it grow longer to trap more snow which adds insulation.
- Add a layer of mulch (8-12 inches) over the pipes, tank and soil treatment area to provide insulation as well. A mulch of loose hay or straw works well, as do leaves. The key is to keep it loose to form air pockets, which act as the insulators. This is particularly important if your system is new, and vegetative cover has not been well established
- Use normal amounts of water; the warmer the better. Spread out your laundry schedule to one warm/hot load per day, year around.
- Don't leave water running all the time to prevent freezing. A slow trickle could freeze, while a steady stream could overload the system with water.
- Don't add antifreeze to the system.
- If you plan to be gone for more than a day or two, plan accordingly. Have someone visit and use water regularly. If you are going to be gone for an extended period (weeks or months), pumping the tank before leaving may be the best option if you don't have someone who can occupy the home while you are away.
- Reroute the drip water from your furnace. This slow drip can freeze in the pipes. Route this clean water into the sump or a bucket.
- Fix any leaky plumbing. The small trickles of water going into the system can freeze, as thin ice layers within the pipes, and eventually close them.
- Keep all vehicles (including ATV's and snowmobiles) and high-traffic people activities off the system, all year. Compaction contributes to freezing.
- Make sure all risers, inspection pipes and manholes have tight covers. Cold air entering the system through these places may cause freezing as well. Adding insulation is a good idea. Check for any cracks in the covers in the fall.
- Keep an eye on your system. If any seeping or ponding occurs, contact an onsite professional.

Be proactive in maintaining and managing your septic system year round for the longevity of the system and the service it provides you and your family!