

Flooding and Septic Systems

What steps should I take if my septic system is flooded?

- It is strongly recommended that the system should not be used while the septic drain field or tanks are covered with water. The sewage system should not be used until the water in the septic drain field is below the distribution pipes.
- If the system must be used, conserve water as much as possible while the system attempts to restore itself as the ground water table falls.
- Flood water may be contaminated with sewage. Protect yourself by wearing protective equipment such as gloves, protective eyewear, a face mask and rubber boots. Be sure to wash your hands frequently with soap and water.
- Do not pump your septic tank. Pumping out a septic tank that is sitting in saturated soil may cause it to “pop out” of the ground. Newer systems are more likely to pop out than older systems because the soil may not have completely settled and compacted around the septic tank.
- Try to avoid using any heavy machinery near the septic drain field or tanks in a saturated state, as they are especially vulnerable to damage under flooded conditions.
- If sewage has backed up into a basement, clean the area and disinfect the floor. Use a chlorine solution of a half cup of chlorine bleach to a gallon of water when mopping the floor.
- If you have a ground water well, do not drink the water until water testing proves it to be safe for consumption.

For more information, please contact Eric Kohlsmith, Septic Inspector, Mississippi Rideau Septic System Office at 613 253 0006 ext. 256 or by email at ekohlsmith@mvc.on.ca