

# Maintain Your Septic - Protect Pond Health

Revised 12/19/2025

**Failing or poorly maintained septic systems pollute ponds, lakes, and groundwater.**

**Know the location of your septic tank, distribution box, and leaching field/pit. The Harwich Board of Health should have the plans for your system on file.**

**Hire a licensed hauler and ensure they do the following:**

- 1) Check tank covers for cracks or corrosion
  - a. Hauler should be uncovering all access ports/covers of tank and inspecting. Many tanks have two leads – both should be uncovered and pumped.
  - b. Hauler should use hook to lift covers – never a shovel as it can damage cover/tank
- 2) Inspect structural integrity of tank
  - a. Start by clearing debris from the lid and checking for structural damage like cracks or leaks.
  - b. Check that the baffles are intact and not clogged.
  - c. Look for signs of corrosion or deterioration.
- 3) Observe irregularities:
  - a. Make sure sludge layers are not too thick/heavy (little/light is preferred). Sludge should not exceed 30% of the tank's capacity.
  - b. Observe liquid level:
    1. If liquid is too low - possible leak
    2. If liquid is too high - possible clog
  - c. Look for root infiltration, wipes, thick toilet paper
  - d. Is there heavy grease (grease shield?)
- 4) Test main line flow from house to tank (homeowner should be present for this by either running water or flushing toilet)
- 5) Does hauler report tank health, make recommendations, and discuss needed repairs?

**For a list of licensed septic haulers with Harwich Board of Health, call 508-430-7509 or visit**

**<https://content.civicplus.com/api/assets/6fa74816-0113-475a-8f59-a8634da4c1a8>**

*Many companies offer new customer, multi-home, online/website discounts – just ask!*

*Some haulers routinely contact homeowners when next pumping is suggested.*

*Make sure hauler properly digs up cover(s) and returns yard to previous condition.*

*Homeowners should find out how many clean-out inlets septic tank has (many have inlet access as well as outlet access ports).*

**[Click here for Harwich-based haulers who have agreed to a \\$25 discount for HPC members](#)**