

Maintain Your Septic - Protect Pond Health

Revised June 2026

Failing or poorly maintained septic systems pollute ponds, lakes, and groundwater. Hire a licensed hauler and ensure they do the following:

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

- 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 (ask about a 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 ask how many clean-out inlets septic tank has (many have inlet access as well as outlet access ports).

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