

Looking after your septic tank

Household cleaners



Substitutes for household cleaning products

General cleaners

Use soft soap cleaners and biodegradable cleaners and those low in chlorine levels.

Dish washing

Use liquid or powdered pure soap, for more difficult jobs add 2/3 teaspoons of vinegar. If using a dishwasher try using baking soda in the soap compartment of your dishwasher and vinegar in the rinse aid dispenser.

Disinfectant

In preference use borax: half a cup in 4 litre's of water.

Laundry powders

Choose one with zero phosphate content and no chlorine. If comparing powders, choose the powder with the lowest sodium level.

Toilet cleaners

Sprinkle baking soda then scrub the toilet. Ammonia based cleaners Instead sprinkle baking soda on a damp sponge, for windows use 2 tbs white vinegar to 1 litre of water.

Scouring cleaners and powders

Instead sprinkle baking soda on a damp sponge or add 4 tbs baking soda to 1 litre of warm water.

Drain decloggers

Avoid declogging chemicals. Instead use a plunger or pour a mixture of up to 3 cups of vinegar and 3 tablespoons of baking powder down the drain and flush with hot water 30 minutes later, if method does not work call a plumber/drainlayer.



What you should know about cleaning agents

Laundry powders are often extremely high in sodium, which will destroy soils. Check labels for sodium levels.

Grey water consisting of washing machine wash cycle can be extremely caustic (PH of up to 10) Although this will be diluted in the treatment unit, the caustic grey water will still impact micro organisms (or bug) populations within the treatment unit and receiving soils. It is these bugs that provide vital treatment of many of the contaminants within domestic waste water and adversely affects soil structure.

Wastewater flows from dishwasher can have an impact on the treatment unit, not only due to increased wastewater flow volumes and additional organic waste, but more importantly due to the strength of the cleaning chemical used.

Highly corrosive cleaners(Such as toilet and drain cleaners) that have precautionary labels warning users to minimise direct contact are an indication that the cleaner can adversely affect the on site wastewater management system.

Up to one cup of bactericides such as bleach can be sufficient to impact on all the bugs in the treatment unit, severely affecting tank performance for some time.

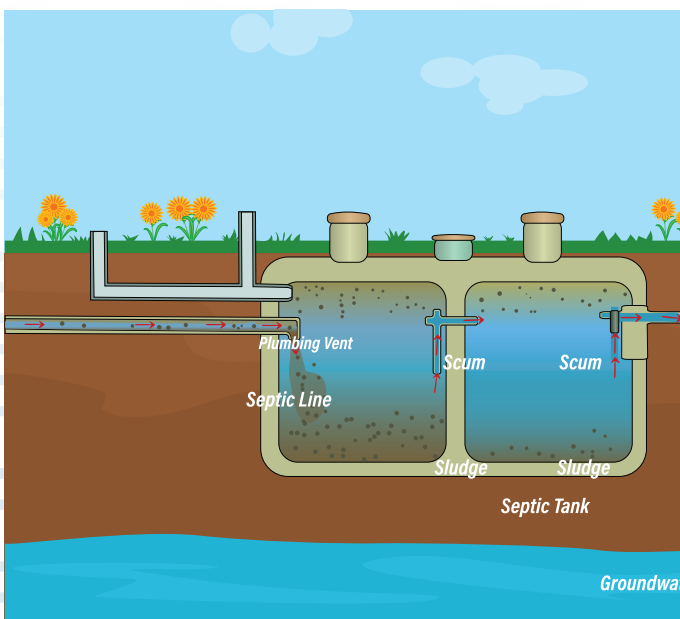
All cleaning chemicals must be used with care and in all cases, the less that is discharged into the on-site system, the better this will be for receiving soils in the long term.

Effects of household cleaners on on-site wastewater management systems

The use of cleaning chemicals in buildings with on-site management systems can result in high concentrations of the chemicals going into the treatment unit and into the soils within the land application area.

These chemicals can seriously affect the performance of the treatment unit and reduce soil quality and condition.

If this occurs, contaminants within the domestic wastewater may not be treated and contained on the property, which means possible impacts on the surrounding environment.



For more information visit:

marlborough.govt.nz

Marlborough District Council

Ph: +64 3 520 7400

Email: mdc@marlborough.govt.nz

