



# Septic Systems and Wells

What home buyers and sellers need to know

# Septic Systems

- Is the sewage system working?
  - How do I test the system (dye, water test)
  - Untreated discharges (Grey and Black water)
  - Recognizing sewage malfunctions

# Leakage an ground surface





# Plumbing Backup

- Toilet or sinks hard to drain
- Gurgling noises during water usage
- Sewage discharge in the house (usually lowest fixture in the house)
- Odours

# Other things to watch for

- Septic tank pumping (every 3 – 5 years)
- Water softener and other water treatment devices backwash – should not backwash into septic system
- Storm water drainage should be away from sewage system
- No trees near field bed
- Grass/shallow root cover over field bed

# Where can I get info. on Septic system

- Original on-site Approval/Permit and Certificate of Installation
- Information request through NSE
  - <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/dept/envregistry.asp>
  - <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/dept/foipop.asp>
- Current and previous homeowners
- Pumper, Installer, Qualified Persons
  - <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/permits/holders.asp>

# Septic System Publications

- Taking Care of Your Home Sewage Disposal System
  - <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/water/docs/OnSiteSewageMaintenance.pdf>
- Before You Construct an On-Site Sewage Disposal System
  - <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/water/docs/OnSiteSewageConstruction.pdf>

# Private Water Supplies

- Dug or driller wells
- Springs
- Surface water (e.g. lakes & rivers)
- Cistern

# Testing drinking water

- Bacteria
  - Total coliform
  - Fecal coliform
- Chemical/Mineral
  - Many parameters but most labs have standard packages

# How do I get more info.?

- Well log from homeowner or search:
  - <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/water/welldatabase.asp>
- Well drillers & diggers
  - <http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/permits/holders.asp>
- Canadian drinking water guidelines
  - <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/water-eau/drink-potab/guide/index-eng.php>

# Drinking water publications

- A Guide for Private Well Owners

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/water/docs/wellwaterbookletEnglish.pdf>

- Before You Construct a Water Well

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/water/docs/ConstructWell.pdf>

- Specific contaminant challenges (The Drop on Water)

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/nse/water/thedroponwater.asp>

## Environmental Home Assessment Program

- Educate rural homeowners on operation & maintenance of:
    - Septic system
    - Water supply
    - Oil tank
  - Homeowners can book apt. at:
    - 1 866-500-3427
- Visit our display!