Your Household Septic System: A Consumer Guide to the Alabama Onsite Wastewater Industry

Tuskegee University Cooperative Extension Program / Alabama Onsite Wastewater Board
Consumers

• Know you have a working septic system
• Not sure if your septic system is working / Experiencing some issues
• Know you have a failing septic system
• Don’t have a septic system / Will need one
Alabama Department of Public Health
Maintaining Your Septic Tank System
(ADPH-OSM-6-9-03-kw)
Onsite Wastewater Industry

- Ala. Dept of Public Health
  - Onsite Rules and Laws / Environmentalists
- Ala. Onsite Wastewater Board (AOWB)
  - Licensing / Compliance Officers
- Ala. Onsite Wastewater Association (AOWA)
  - Professionalism / Staff & Training Center
Onsite Wastewater Workers

• Licensed Installers
  – Design and install septic systems
  – Permit from Environmentalist

• Licensed Pumpers
  – Clean and inspect septic systems
Onsite Wastewater Workers

- Licensed Manufacturers
  - Cast and provide approved septic tanks

- Licensee Roster – aowb.alabama.gov
Installation or Repair Costs

• Specific to your site
• Obtain at least three (3) quotes from licensed professionals
• AOWB Licensee Roster Search
  – Online
  – Local Health Department
Do’s & Don’ts – Septic Tank

• Do
  – Regular pump/inspect
  – Address problems
  – Landmark/access

• Don’t
  – Garbage disposal
  – Non-biodegradables
  – Additives/enzymes
Do’s & Don’ts – Disposal Field

• Do
  – Conserve/meter water
  – Effluent filter
  – Divert water

• Don’t
  – Harmful/Hazardous
  – Parking/Compaction/Construction/Planting
  – Pools
Septic System Problems

• Signs
  – wet spots in the yard
  – slow draining toilets or drains
  – gurgling sounds in your drains
  – sewage odors

• Actions
  – Environmentalist
  – Licensed Professional
Low-Income Households

• AOWA TRAC Program
  – Income-dependent
  – Septic system work at no cost to homeowner
  – AOWA members donate equipment and labor
  – Limited number of systems
More Information

• Alabama Department of Health
  – www.adph.org/onsite

• Alabama Onsite Wastewater Board
  – aowb.alabama.gov

• Alabama Onsite Wastewater Association
  – www.aowainfo.org