

## Cleaning Frequency Guidelines

How often a septic tank needs to be cleaned depends on the tank's design and how it is operated. In this chart, the negative factors that affect the cleaning frequency are called EFFECTS and the positive factors that reduce the frequency of cleaning are called CREDITS.

Consider the frequency guideline from this worksheet and the conditions observed when the tank is cleaned to decide when the tank will next need cleaning. No tank should go more than 36 months between cleanings!

**EFFECTS**  
FACTORS  
Enter 10 points for wastewater that enters the septic system for each of these appliances:

	POINTS FOR EACH FACTOR
▶ Water conditioning unit (water softener or iron filter)	_____
▶ Garbage Disposal	_____
▶ Automatic clothes washer	_____

Enter 10 points if you have:

▶ An in-home business (such as daycare, beauty shop)	_____
▶ More than 4 over-night guests at a time, several times per year	_____
▶ A laundry pattern of doing three or more loads/day	_____

Enter 10 points if your septic tank is smaller than indicated for the size of the house

HOUSE SIZE	TANK CAPACITY
2-3 bedrooms	1000 gallons
4-5 bedrooms	1500 gallons
6-7 bedrooms	1750 gallons
8-9 bedrooms	2000 gallons

Enter the points indicated if the last cleaning was:

FREQUENCY	POINTS
1-2 years ago	0
4-5 years ago	5
6-10 years ago	10
more than 10 years ago	12

The number of people living and using water in the household affects the cleaning frequency. Enter the number of people for the house size and do the calculation

HOUSE SIZE # OF PEOPLE	LOAD	
2 bedroom _____	- 3=	} X3= _____ (subtract if number is negative)
3 bedroom _____	- 4=	
4 bedroom _____	- 5=	
5 bedroom _____	- 6=	
6 bedroom _____	- 7=	
7 bedroom _____	- 8=	

TOTAL EFFECTS

**CREDITS**  
FACTORS  
Enter 10 points if you:

▶ Use a suds-saving front-loading clothes washer, or do 4 or fewer loads of laundry spread throughout the week	_____
▶ Have two full-size septic tanks or one tank with 150% or more of the capacity required for your house	_____

Enter 5 points if you:

▶ Are ULTRA-CONSERVATIVE on water use	_____
▶ Use low-volume toilets (3 gallons or less per flush)	_____
▶ Use low-flow shower heads	_____
▶ Have two or fewer people in the house and bathe fewer than five times per week	_____
▶ Have no one at home for 10 hours or more most days	_____

TOTAL CREDITS

Enter your numbers in this equation to calculate how often your septic tank should be cleaned

36 -  +  =  months between cleanings  
(effects number) (credits number)