



Department of Public Works
BUREAU OF UTILITIES

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**ON-SITE WASTEWATER
TREATMENT SYSTEM USER'S GUIDE**

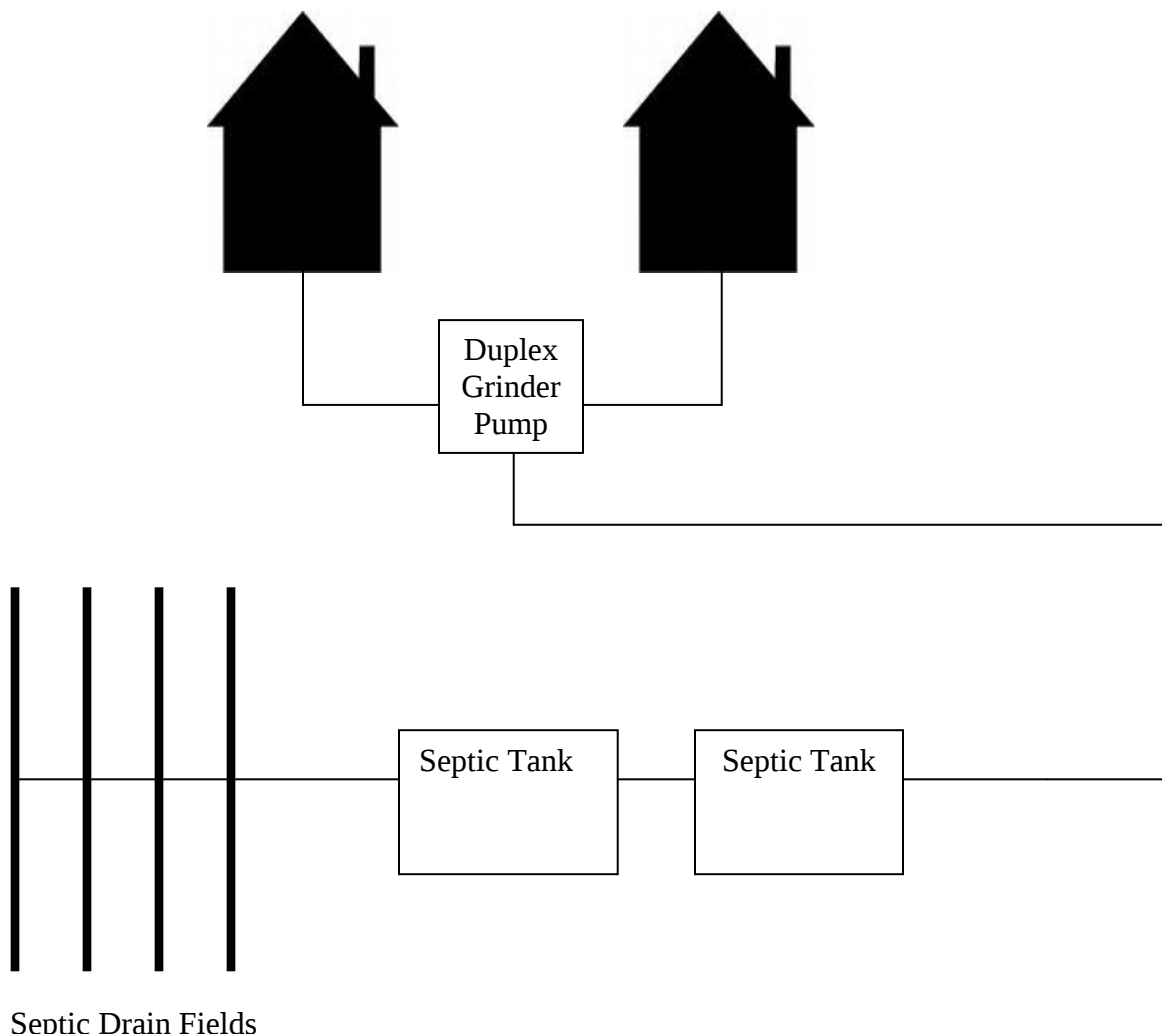
**TRIADELPHIA CROSSING WASTEWATER COLLECTION,
TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL SYSTEM**

**USER MANUAL
COUNTY-OWNED ON-SITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT**

Revised January 2010

System Features:

Residents in areas with public sewer have their sewage piped to a municipal treatment plant where it is usually treated and discharged to a receiving body of water. Other residents have their sewage treated in individual On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems (OSDS) where treatment begins in a septic tank and then discharges to a drain field on their property. Your community is served by a shared septic system, which combines features of both the municipal treatment plant, and OSDs. Referring to the diagram below, sewage leaves your house and enters the grinder pump tank located in the 10' X 10' public access easement at the front of your property. The green access manhole of the grinder pump should be visible in your front yard. The grinder pump then pumps the sewage into a series of shared septic tanks located behind 14222 & 14226 Meadow Lake Drive. The septic tanks provide the first steps in treating the wastewater. They act as settling chambers, allowing the solids to settle to the bottom and the Fats, Oils & Grease (FOG) to float to the top. In addition, anaerobic bacteria in the septic tank(s) also digest the waste, turning it into liquids and gasses. The wastewater then leaves the second septic tank and flows into the drain fields which are also located behind 14222 & 14226 Meadow Lake Drive. The drain fields are located in soil that digests/removes most contaminants (viruses and bacteria) from the wastewater before it reaches the groundwater.



What are the advantages to using a shared septic system?

1. Homes that are hooked into a shared septic system have yards with no restrictions on building accessory structures, pools, and decks other than maintaining a 30-foot separation from the water well. Homes with on-site septic systems often have limitations or will not accommodate accessory structures, pools and decks.
2. The Howard County Bureau of Utilities (BOU) is responsible for the operation, maintenance and ultimate replacement of the shared septic system. The BOU is also responsible for the operation and maintenance of the grinder pump located in the utility easement at the front of your property. This includes emergency response by a maintenance professional 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You are only responsible for the maintenance of the line from your house to the metal cleanout by the grinder pump cover. Owners of individual OSDs are responsible for the operation, maintenance and replacement of their entire system.
3. It returns water to the ground rather than discharging it to surface waters like a municipal treatment system does.
4. The use of a shared septic system leads to the clustering of homes, which allows for the preservation of open space and agriculture.

How are the fees for use of the shared septic system decided upon?

The Howard County Bureau of Facilities is responsible for the setting and collection of fees. Each shared septic system is unique, therefore, fees are calculated on what it actually costs to maintain and ultimately replace the system in your neighborhood. Your user fees may be higher than typically charged for the use of a municipal treatment system. This is because the costs are shared by only four homeowners. There are three components to the total fee amount:

- Approximately 80% of the yearly costs are associated with the general operation and maintenance of the system. This includes but may not be limited to County labor costs, lawn care, replacement equipment and any necessary parts and supplies.
- A portion of the fee is set aside for the future replacement of the drain fields.
- A portion of the fee is combined with the other users of shared septic systems in the County for the catastrophic or *pre-mature* failure of the drain fields (risk fund).

The fees are reassessed each year and set by the County Council. If there is a need for a fee increase or decrease, your homeowner's association will be notified.

The following is a list of recommendations to keep the shared septic system operating properly:

Do's	Don'ts
Familiarize yourself with the location of the following objects on your property: • Emergency contact phone number – this can be found on the cover of the pump control panel, it is 410-313-4900 • Pump control panel • Sewer standpipe cleanouts • Sewage grinder pump chamber • Curb stop valve box • Well for drinking water Call 410-313-4900 if; the alarm control light or buzzer should go off, you are experiencing a sewer backup or observe any surface discharge. County personnel will inspect and diagnose the problem. If the problem is found to be with equipment that is owned by Howard County, the County will fix the problem. If it is determined that the problem is in the line connecting the house to the cleanout standpipe located at the public/private property easement, it will be the homeowner's responsibility to maintain and repair. When the pump is in a state of alarm, you will be able to continue using water, but you should try to minimize your use. Pushing the rubber sealed button located on the underside of the pump control panel can silence the high-level alarm buzzer. Leave the area over and around the public standpipe cleanout, grinder pump chamber, and pump control panel visible and free of obstructions. Place kitchen waste in the garbage. Use a strainer in the kitchen sink.	DON'T subject the sewer cleanout standpipe to vehicular traffic, or place any permanent construction over these items. DON'T obstruct access to the sewer cleanout standpipe, pump chamber, or pump control panel. There should be no landscaping within 5 feet of the pump control panel and no landscaping or mulch within 12 feet of the pump chamber or cleanout standpipe. DON'T connect, tie in, or divert any gutter downspout, surface runoff water, storm water, basement sump pumps, or well water treatment/softener system backwash to the shared septic system. MINIMIZE the use of your garbage disposal. They tend to increase the amount of solids, fats, oils and grease that are sent to the septic tank. This results in the need for more frequent pumping of the septic tanks and higher maintenance costs. DON'T put fats, oil or grease into the shared septic system. DON'T use automatic dishwashers that have built in disposals or add enzymes. DON'T use automatic toilet bowl cleaners; they kill bacteria in the treatment process. DON'T flush flammable, toxic, or hazardous waste (such as degreasers, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, strong disinfectants, prescription medications, fuels, paints, stains, varnishes, paint thinners, or solvents) into the shared septic system.

DO	DON'T
Place cooking oils and grease into a container to cool off. Then dispose of the waste into the garbage. Carefully measure soaps, detergents, and disinfectants. Hook up “domestic wastewater” only to the gravity sewage collection discharge from your home. If it doesn’t come from washing or using the toilet, don’t put it into the Shared Septic system. Always practice water conservation: • Be sure all water using devices in the home operate properly • Install water saving devices (low flow showerheads, faucet aerators, and toilet tank dams). • Repair leaking toilets and faucets • Run washing machine and dishwasher only when you have a full load • Spread out the laundry: wash the clothes over a period of several days • Keep a bottle of cold water in the refrigerator Properly dispose of hazardous household chemicals. Maintain good surface water drainage away from the sewage grinder pump chamber located on your property. Direct water treatment/softener back wash water away from the shared septic system and drinking water wells.	DON'T wash out paint brushes or drywall compound into the shared septic system. DON'T flush paper towels, sanitary napkins and pads, or cloth goods into the shared septic system. This includes flushable wipes, disinfecting wipes and baby wipes. DON'T put abrasive material (such as aquarium gravel, kitty litter, glass, egg shells, sand, stone, plastics, or dirt) into the shared septic system. DON'T put any of the following items in to the shared septic system: • Explosives • Flammable material • Strong chemicals • Gasoline • Lubricating oil and /or grease DON'T add any agents or treatment chemicals to the septic tank that claim to assist its natural bacteriological process. Adding chemicals may only interfere with the natural function of shared septic system. <i>Failure to follow these guidelines by putting any of the above items into the shared septic system can cause pre-mature failure of the drain fields, cause the SBR to malfunction and/or ruin the grinder pump serving your house. Premature failure may require an increase in the yearly fees for the entire neighborhood. Or in situations where it is possible to trace the cause of failure back to an individual homeowner, the homeowner may be individually liable for replacing or repairing the damaged parts of the system.</i>