



**Department of Public Works
BUREAU OF UTILITIES**

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

**WILLOW RIDGE WASTEWATER COLLECTION
TREATMENT AND DISPOSAL SYSTEM**

USER MANUAL

October 2013

I. INTRODUCTION

This booklet provides information for the user of the new wastewater treatment and disposal system for the Willow Ridge subdivision. Included are descriptions and specific instructions for the proper use and maintenance of the County-owned shared septic system. The Howard County Department of Public Works encourages citizen participation and questions through the Bureau of Utilities, telephone number: **410-313-4900**.

The wastewater management plan combines a low pressure collection system with conventional on-site treatment. The system contains the following:

- Individual gravity sewer house connection for each home
- Lot 1 – gravity sewer house connection to the sewer main
- Lots 2 thru 5 – gravity sewer house connection to a duplex grinder pumping system
- Common low pressure sewer collection main.
- Common septic tanks
- Distribution to the shared leachfield for treatment and ultimate disposal by soil absorption.

The unique wastewater treatment and disposal system uses a community septic tank and disposal area wherein septic waste is conveyed by gravity to the subsurface disposal area.

One aspect of your community that is unique to Howard County is that it is served by public water. All other communities served by a shared septic system have individual wells providing their drinking water. Because of this unique situation, your community will continue to have drinking water available for use during power outages. However, during a power outage, the grinder pumps serving Lots 2 thru 5 will not be functioning. There is a MAXIMUM storage volume for each house of about 75 to 80 gallons and this is assuming the tank was empty when the power went out. **Please be advised that during a power outage, Lots 2 thru 5 should minimize water usage. Failure to do so could result in sewer back-ups into the house.**

The following System User's Guide provides valuable information to you. The Willow Ridge Shared Septic system will be maintained by the Department of Public Works, but we need your help.

II. A GUIDE FOR THE SEPTIC SYSTEM USER

Review this User's Manual carefully, and please follow this list of Do's and Don'ts

IMPORTANT NOTE: You do NOT need to add any agents or treatment chemicals to the septic tank to assist its natural bacteriological process. Adding chemicals may only interfere with the natural function of your septic system.

DO	DON'T
Familiarize yourself with the location of the sanitary sewer house connection standpipe cleanout(s). Call 410-313-4900 if you are experiencing sewer backup problems with your entire residence or observe any surface discharge. County personnel will inspect and service the site, making emergency calls when needed. However, plumbing from the house to the cleanout standpipe located at the public/private property easement is the responsibility of the homeowner to maintain and repair. Leave the area over and around standpipe cleanout visible and free of obstructions. 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. Place kitchen waste in the garbage. Use a strainer in the kitchen sink. Place cooking oils and grease into a container to cool off. Then dispose of the waste into the garbage.	DON'T subject the sewer cleanout standpipe to vehicular traffic, or place any permanent construction over these items. DON'T put grease, fats or oils down the drain. DON'T build or plant near or around, sewer 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. DON'T use garbage disposals in your home. DON'T use automatic dishwashers that have built in disposals or add enzymes. DON'T use automatic toilet bowl cleaners; they will kill bacteria in the treatment process. DON'T wash out paint brushes or drywall compound into the shared septic system. 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.

III. A GUIDE FOR THE SEPTIC SYSTEM USER

DO	DON'T
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. Carefully measure soaps, detergents, and disinfectants. Direct water treatment/softener back wash water away from the shared septic system and drinking water wells.	DON'T flush paper towels, sanitary napkins and pads, or cloth goods into the shared septic system. DON'T put abrasive material (such as aquarium gravel, kitty litter, glass, egg shells, sand, stone, or dirt) into the shared septic system.

IV. SHARED LEACHFIELD

The sewage treatment and disposal area, located at the end of Willow Ridge Lane, is the final discharge point for the wastewater. All discharge occurs underground, the area above is designated as a preservation parcel. While this natural area is to be enjoyed for its variety of plants and wildlife, the active portion of the disposal area is a “no trespassing” area due to the variety of exposed pipes above ground.

V. CONCLUSION

If you would like more information on your sewer connection, the Willow Ridge Shared Septic system, or about any of our clean water programs, the Howard County Department of Public Works will be happy to answer questions. Please call 410-313-4900.
