

What is the difference between septage and biosolids?

Septage is the human and household waste flushed into a septic tank, latrine or portable toilet, and it is normally only found in aliquid form.

Biosolids are the accumulated and treated residual products from domestic wastewater treatment. For example, human and household waste that has been processed by a sewage treatment plant. Biosolids can be found in both “Cake” (thick, pudding-like consistency) and liquid forms.

Tri-County Health Department

Tri-County Health Department Regulation No. O-17 defines septage as a liquid or semisolid which includes normal household wastes, human excreta, animal or vegetable matter in suspension or solution generated from a septic tank serving a dwelling, building or other establishment.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Definition

The EPA defines septage as liquid or solid material removed from a septic tank, cesspool, portable toilet or similar system that receives only domestic sewage. It is not grease trap pumpings and commercial or industrial waste.

Environmental Health Office Locations

Aurora

15400 E. 14th Place, Suite 309
Aurora, CO 80011
303-363-3055

Administration Office

6162 S. Willow Dr. Suite 100
Greenwood Village, CO 80111
720-200-1670

Castle Rock

410 S. Wilcox St.
Castle Rock, CO
80104 303-846-2027

Commerce City

7190 Colorado Blvd. Ste 200
Commerce City, CO 80022
303-288-6816



Tri-County Health Department
6162 S. Willow Dr. Suite 100
Greenwood Village, CO 80111
(720) 200-1670
www.tchd.org

Photos courtesy of Matt Campbell, Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment. Tri-County Health Department does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, gender, sexual orientation, color, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status or any other status protected by state law.

Revised 7/2019

Proper Land Application of Septage



Septage is the human and household waste flushed into a septic tank, latrine or portable toilet. When applied properly, it helps to fertilize soil and add organic content and it is an economical solution to managing septage.



Septage is the human and household waste flushed into a septic tank or latrine.

What does Tri-County Health Department do to regulate the land application of septage?

Tri-County Health Department (TCHD) licenses On-Site Wastewater Treatment System cleaners (“Septic system pumpers”).

As part of the licensing process, TCHD requires that systems cleaners submit to TCHD contracts with the facilities they use to dispose of the domestic septage, which they remove from septic tanks. These “facilities” include sewage treatment works as well as companies that accept and “land apply” the septage.

TCHD responds to complaints about land application of septage, but does not issue permits to land-apply septage.

What are the benefits of land application of septage?

- Septage contains nitrogen and phosphorus like many other fertilizers. It helps to fertilize soil and add organic content
- It is an economical solution to managing septage

What are the risks of improper land application of septage?

- If improperly applied, it may expose humans and animals to harmful pathogens (such as bacteria, viruses and parasites) that could cause diseases to humans
- It could attract insects, rodents, birds and other animals that could transmit diseases to humans
- It could cause nuisances such as odors and visible trash
- It could pollute ground and surface waters



What regulations govern the land application of septage?

EPA Title 40 CFR Part 503 Rule sets the standards for the use or disposal of sewage sludge. Domestic septage (from septic tanks) is considered “sewage sludge” by the EPA and is regulated under the EPA 503 Rule.

In addition, Tri-County Health Department Regulation No. O-17 requires that septage be disposed at sites approved by local county officials or approved by the Health Officer “in a manner which does not create a hazard to the public health, a nuisance or an undue risk of pollution, and which complies with state and local rules and applicable regulations.”

How do the regulations protect me from the risks of septage?

- They require treatment, injection, or incorporation of septage below the ground to reduce the risk of disease transmission
- They limit exposure to grazing animals after application
- They set a time limit on planting of food crops at application areas
- They limit the amount applied to land in order to avoid contamination of groundwater and surface water



How do I get more information or report illegal activity?

For more information or if you suspect that someone is illegally or improperly land applying septage, please contact us at our Environmental Health Field Offices. We will investigate the complaint and take appropriate action:

- Aurora Office: (303) 363-3055
- Greenwood Village Office: (720) 200-1670
- Castle Rock Office: (303) 846-2027
- Commerce City Office: (303) 288-6816

Please be specific with your complaint, including information about the vehicles involved. Obtain a license plate number or any other identifiable information from the truck or other equipment if possible. Record the location of your observations as well as a date and time, who was involved (if known) and what you observed taking place. Photos can also be very helpful during an

Both biosolids and septage are required to be land applied at an agronomic rate (the rate at which the crops can uptake the nutrients with none left over). If you see someone dumping liquids from the back of a truck this is most likely NOT legal and should be reported.

Likewise, if the operator is using equipment that is adjustable it is probably okay but we can verify this if we receive additional information.