



## Septic Health Resources

### Septic Horror Stories

“Paul - FYI on the septic system topic - I can now add my own 'horror story' to your growing list to help convince everyone that regular pumpouts (and inspections when necessary) are crucial. I used the same guys you did. My septic system is about 20 years old, has never exhibited any problems, there are absolutely no signs of any problems outside (no smells, no damp areas, no excessive vegetation growth), and I have had it pumped out approximately every 5 years. After digging to expose the septic lids a few days before the appointment, I lifted one lid for a quick visual inspection. I immediately saw that my liquid level was down, therefore I knew I had a leak - that confirmed to me that I wanted an inspection as well as the pumpout. I expected it to be in the connections somewhere, and was going to have it repaired (along with installing an effluent filter). After some tricky work, however, the guys discovered the leak to be a long physical crack in the concrete septic tank (not easy to see). My system is considered failed, and I will be replacing the tank.

I asked why there would be no indication of this failure anywhere, and the answer is that the leakage just migrates down through the soil, hits bedrock, and flows away downhill - to the lake. Given the gravel and soil (plus the distance) it passes through, it is not currently 'polluting' the water - all my bacteria readings have been good. However I'm sure it's not as good as a properly working system, and over time, and if there are more and more people in the same situation, we will collectively be polluting our waters. Apparently in the experience of these guys, many people will just ignore the problem, given the high cost of repair, and its invisible nature. Further to this I continue to have regular conversations with lakefront owners who insist that "I have a septic system that doesn't need pumping", and "I have a steel tank that is 40 years old, but I think it's still OK". I am convinced that mandatory inspections are needed because there are just too many people not following proper practices.

I don't know how you're planning to communicate the septic stories from your own experience and the others. For now I'd prefer you don't broadcast my name with my story, at least until the repair is completed. If you have any questions or comments, let me know.”