



Saskatchewan Onsite Wastewater
Management Association

Decommissioning Out-of-Service Septic Tanks

Septic tanks and holding tanks contain toxic gases and pathogens and must be decommissioned properly in order to avoid contaminating the environment or causing a safety issue to the unsuspecting.

The recommended practice for decommissioning a septic or holding tank is as follows:

1. All solids and liquids must be removed by a registered hauler and disposed of at a licensed sewage treatment plant, lagoon or receiving facility.
2. Any electrical devices or components must be removed and disposed of. Devices containing mercury, such as pump floats, must be disposed of at a licensed hazardous waste disposal facility.
3. Once solids and liquids have been removed the empty tank should:
 - a. Be filled with clean sand, gravel or other acceptable material and sealed, or
 - b. Be crushed and the ensuing excavation be filled with acceptable fill material.
4. The area should be graded and vegetative cover (grass) must be established.

The best practice would be to fill the empty tank rather than crush it as crushing a tank will introduce contaminants into the surrounding soil.

Septic tanks, whether in use or out-of-use pose a significant safety hazard to animals and small children. Lids must be secured to ensure unauthorized access is denied.