SepticSmart Week Stresses Importance of Septic System Maintenance in North Idaho

HAYDEN, ID – Governor Otter recently declared September 21-25 Idaho SepticSmart Week and Panhandle Health District is reminding North Idaho homeowners of their role in preventing pollution and disease by knowing the status of their septic system. Last year, Panhandle Health District (PHD) permitted 763 septic systems, over 25% of all septic permits in Idaho.

“Our community is home to some of Idaho’s most pristine lakes, rivers and aquifers, but improperly maintained septic systems can negatively impact these resources that we all enjoy,” said Erik Ketner, PHD’s Environmental Health Manager.

Septic system owners are responsible for ensuring proper function and safety of their systems, including appropriate use, routine inspections by certified professionals, as well as getting needed repairs done quickly.

Ketner continues, “Not only is proper maintenance a legal requirement of each septic system owner, but it also just makes sense from a property investment standpoint. Panhandle Health District is always willing to consult with system owners and provide them with information on proper care of their system.”

Here are some important (and catchy!) reminders for septic system owners in North Idaho:

**Think at the sink** - Pouring oil, grease and/or chemicals down the drain can clog a system’s pipes and drain field.

**Don’t overload the commode** – Only put things in the toilet that belong there.

**Don’t strain your drain** – Be water efficient and spread out water use.
**Shield your field** – Remind guests not to park or drive on a system’s drain field where the weight could cause damage.

**Protect it and inspect it** - Routine inspections and pumping of a system can catch problems before the system fails, protecting your property’s value and keeping your family healthy. PHD recommends scheduling an inspection every 3-5 years.

For more information and resources about septic permitting and maintenance, visit PHD’s [website](#) or call and speak with an Environmental Health Specialist at (208) 415-5220.

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