



Panhandle Health District

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Panhandle Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Panhandle Health District Encourages Homeowners to Care for Their Septic Systems

HAYDEN, ID – Panhandle Health District (PHD) is kicking off the fourth annual SepticSmart Week (September 19-23, 2016) by encouraging homeowners in North Idaho to properly maintain their septic system. One in every three homes in Idaho depends on septic systems to treat their wastewater. Septic system care and maintenance is vital to protecting public health and preserving valuable water resources.

“A septic system that isn’t working properly can contaminate ground and surface water, which represents a significant threat to the public’s health, and may be a contributing factor to the harmful algal blooms we’ve seen in area lakes,” said Erik Ketner, PHD’s Environmental Health Program Manager.

System failures can also be inconvenient and costly. 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.

Homeowners can ensure their septic systems are functioning properly by taking these simple steps:

- **Inspect your system annually:** Licensed pumpers can monitor the sludge and scum levels inside the tank; pumping is recommended every 3-5 years.
- **Keep an eye on your drainfield:** Look for signs that your system isn’t working properly, like odors, wet spots or surfacing sewage.
- **Conserve water:** By reducing your water use, you can extend the life of your system and avoid costly repairs.
- **Avoid flushing harmful materials into your tank:** Things like grease, coffee grounds, and harsh chemicals or paints can hinder your system’s operation.

More information about system maintenance, including a list of local septic pumpers is available at <http://panhandlehealthdistrict.org/>.

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