



Factsheet: Advanced OWTS Maintenance Requirements

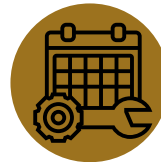
Maintenance is Key to Advanced Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) Function and Longevity

Trained service professionals should regularly inspect, adjust and make recommendations for your system to keep your system performing at its best

Advanced onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS; sometimes referred to as Innovative & Alternative (I&A) or Alternative/Experimental (A/E) systems) are a special type of septic system engineered to provide enhanced wastewater treatment. Advanced systems have a variety of specialized system components (e.g. pumps, blowers, vents) that require regular preventative maintenance and occasional replacements or repairs over their lifespan. Every advanced system must have an active service contract - this is required by law!



Advanced systems are required by regulations in sensitive areas, like along the coast or near drinking water sources. In inland areas, advanced systems are common on sites with shallow water tables or challenging soil conditions



Maintenance is critical to system function, performance and longevity. Advanced systems must be serviced at least semiannually by trained and licensed professionals



Trained service professionals test system function, clean components to remove buildup, assess wear and tear on parts, make necessary repairs and replacements, and share recommendations with the owner



Hiring a service professional



- Before you reach out to a service professional, find out what kind of system you have, how old it is, and what past service has occurred
 - Your state permitting authority, local board of health, or municipality may have this information available online or on file
- Ask: Are you insured, trained, certified, and licensed to service my system components in my area?
 - System manufacturers and vendors provide specialized training and certify service professionals for their specific technology
 - Some jurisdictions require additional training or certifications for service providers in their area
- Ask: What does the cost of your maintenance contract cover or include, and what services or events would be extra? Based on your experience, what are some additional costs that could be incurred over the next five years?
 - Your contract should cover all parts of your system - the advanced treatment technology components and your drainfield

A typical service visit should include...

- Looking around your yard for signs of problems, stormwater management issues, encroaching vegetation, and/or possible impacts or damage to the system
- A thorough inspection and evaluation of your entire system and all its components
 - Evaluate component function and need for cleaning, pump-out needs, repair or replacement
 - Investigate evidence of past or developing system problems in the control panel, vents, tanks or chambers, drainfield and/or areas surrounding each of the system's components
- Periodic cleaning of filters and/or screens, air vents, pumps, pipes in the system and/or drainfield and providing recommendations for next steps (e.g. pump-outs)
- Measuring wastewater characteristics and field parameters to adjust the system and/or optimize its performance
 - Depending on the requirements in your jurisdiction, collecting samples for analysis
- Sharing documentation of maintenance activities performed, as well as any recommendations or next steps, with you and the appropriate regulatory authority

As the system's owner and/or daily user, it is your responsibility to know what your system is designed to handle or treat, and how to care for it. System misuse will shorten its lifespan and prevent it from functioning as designed.



- ✓ **Notify your service professional** if your **property use** and/or the **number of people** living in your house **changes, or your system is having problems**
- ✓ **Follow best practices for system use**, like being careful of what you flush and rinse down the drain, keeping trash and extra inputs (food scraps, water softener backwash, additives, toxic substances) out of your system - see our website for more info!



- ✗ **Impede access** to your system (e.g. by covering or hiding it), or **disable** or turn off the **alarm(s)** or any **components** of the system
- ✗ Direct **stormwater** toward your system, or allow **shrubs** or **trees** to grow **near components**
- ✗ **Use** any system **component as** footings or **structural supports**, or as **storage, parking** or **recreation** areas