

Septic systems can be adversely affected by floodwaters. Taking proactive actions can help limit the possibility of damage to your system, your home and dangers to your health.

BEFORE THE FLOOD

DO:

- Have septic system cleaned, tested and backup pumps available.
- Reduce water use in your home to limit water entering the sewer system by taking less showers, repairing leaking fixtures, and reducing the number of times you flush the toilet. This is the best practice before, during and after the flood.
- Have some knowledge of where your septic tank and drainfield are located on your property. Know the depth to the top of the septic tank and the depth of the drainfield.

DO NOT:

- Do not discharge water from a basement sump into or onto the septic system. Make sure discharge hoses carry water several feet away from the house and away from the drainfield.
- Do not let water from roof gutters discharge onto the septic system.

DURING THE FLOOD

DO:

- Ensure any electrical or mechanical devices in the system avoid contact with the flooded system until it is dry and clean.
- Plug all drains in the basement.
- Prevent silt from entering and plugging pump chambers.

DO NOT:

- Do not use the dishwasher or garbage disposal.
- Do not wash laundry (take to a public laundry if possible).
- Do not use the system if the soil is saturated and flooded.
- Do not use the septic system until water in the soil absorption field is lower than the water level around the house.
- Do not pump the tank during flooded or saturated soil conditions. At best, pumping the tank is only a temporary solution. Under the worst conditions, pumping it out could cause the tank to try to float out of the ground and may damage the inlet and outlet pipes. NEVER pump excess water from the septic tank onto the ground. This violates the North Dakota state plumbing code and poses a health hazard.





AFTER THE FLOOD

DO:

- Pump and check your septic system as soon as possible after the flood.
- If you suspect damage to your septic system have it professionally inspected. Contact a licensed septic pumper or septic system installer.
- Be sure the tank's manhole cover is secure and that inspection ports have not been blocked or damaged.
- Examine all electrical connections for damage before restoring electricity. If the control box was flooded, have a licensed electrician look at the components to make sure they are safe.
- Check the vegetation over your septic tank and soil absorption field. Repair erosion damage, and sod or reseed areas as necessary to provide turf grass cover.
- Clean the area and disinfect the floor if sewage has backed up into the basement. Chlorine bleach can be used to disinfect the area by following label instructions.

DO NOT:

- Do not drink well water until it is tested.
- Do not compact the soil over the septic tank and drainfield by driving or operating equipment in the area.

ASSISTANCE

Contact your local public health unit (LPHU) for city- or county-specific regulations.

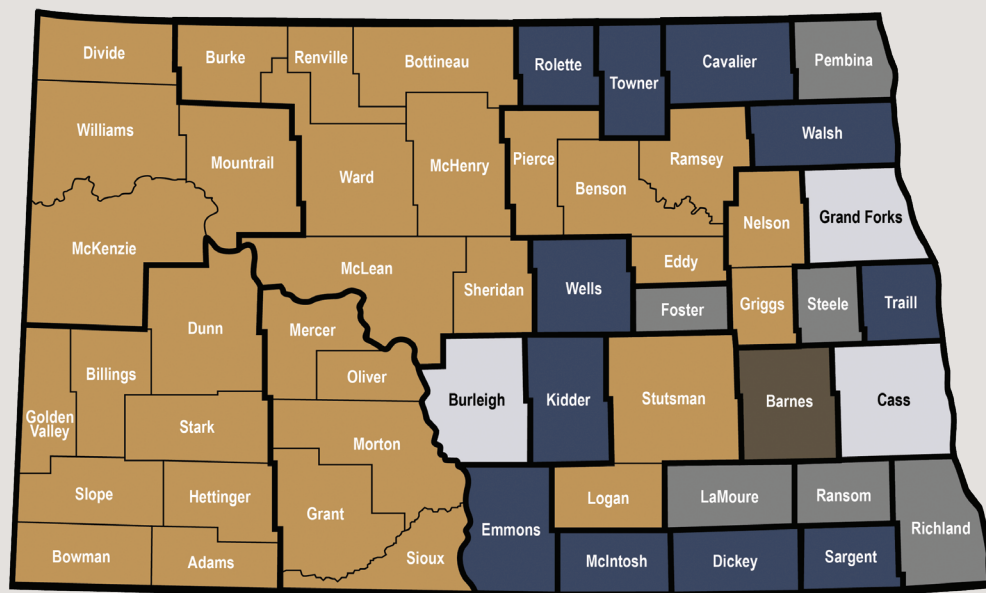
LPHU listings can be found on the following websites:

www.deq.nd.gov/flood

or

www.ndhealth.gov/localhd/

NORTH DAKOTA LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH UNITS



- City/County Health Department
- City/County Health District
- Multi-County Health District
- Single County Health Department
- Single County Health District



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