

### **The septic tank effluent pump (STEP) system**

Since the 1990s, a large number of houses located along Principale Street and private roads (Prud'homme, Chrétien, etc.) in the Village of Wendover are serviced by a wastewater collection system known as the STEP System (Septic Tank Effluent Pump).

This wastewater collection system was installed due to the topography of the area and the depth of the basement of the residences.

The wastewater collection system operates with a septic tank and a pump installed outside each residence. Wastewater is gravity-fed into the septic tank, and pumped into the sanitary sewer system and directed to the sewage treatment plant.

Recently, the municipality has partnered with the University of Ottawa to analyze the status of the STEP system.

The results of the analysis suggest that there is water infiltration into some septic tanks due to sump pump, eaves trough connections to the tank along with rainwater infiltration into the septic tanks.

### **Homeowner responsibilities**

The owner whose residence is connected to the STEP system assumes all the costs related to the

maintenance and operation of the system (septic tank, pump, etc.).

The owner is also responsible for the substances discharged into the STEP system and for the good condition of the septic tank in order to prevent water infiltration.

When water seeps through cracks in the septic tank or an additional volume of water is directed to the septic tank from a sump pump or eaves troughs, the septic tank is filled and the septic system pump is activated.

Instead of pumping wastewater, the STEP system pumps rainwater.



STEP system

### **What is a sump pump?**

Several residences are equipped with a sump pump located in the basement. This pump is used to discharge rainwater that accumulates under the foundation to prevent backflow and flooding of the basement.

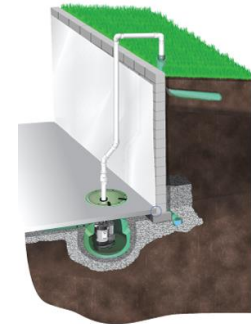
Sump pump connection and eaves trough connections to the STEP System are not permitted.

If your sump pump is connected to the septic tank of the STEP system, you pay the electricity costs to pump rain water into the septic tank and you pay

the electricity to pump that same amount of water into the sanitary sewer.

The same applies if your eaves troughs are connected to the STEP system septic tank.

The outlet of your sump pump may not be placed in a residential drain or in the septic tank. Water exiting from the sump pump should be directed away from the house, towards a ditch or drainage swale or scattered onto the lawn. Do not direct water to neighboring properties (Regulation 47-2001).



Sump pump

### **Septic tank repairs**

It is recommended that owners inspect their septic tank every 5 years to determine its condition and integrity.

If the septic tank is cracked, it can be repaired or sealed with adhesive products or it can be wrapped with an outer impermeable membrane. Contact local contractors to obtain these materials.

It is recommended that clay fill be used to provide additional protection against water infiltration around the septic tank.

### Pump Replacement

The municipality, in collaboration with the Ontario Clean Water Agency, has implemented a program to replace the pump located inside the septic tank of the STEP System. The pump is replaced on average every five (5) years.

### Septic Tank Replacement

If the septic tank needs to be replaced, contact the municipality or the Ontario Clean Water Agency to ensure all equipment and controls are compatible with the STEP system.

### TIPS

What can you do to reduce the cost of sanitary sewer costs?

Make sure your sump pump and eaves troughs are not connected to the septic tank of the STEP system.

Have the condition and integrity of the septic tank checked. Is it cracked or should it be replaced?

***IMPORTANT: Avoid disposing of anything other than toilet paper in the sanitary sewer to avoid blocking problems. All other hygiene products should be thrown away with the domestic garbage.***

For more information, please consult our web page: [www.alfred-plantagenet.com](http://www.alfred-plantagenet.com) or call us at: 613-673-4797.