

# Septic System Information

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## for Rhode Islanders

### HOW TO HIRE A CONTRACTOR FOR SEPTIC SYSTEM INSTALLATION OR REPAIR

Hiring a contractor is often a difficult task. Here are a few suggestions to reduce your risk and help you get the contractor that is best for your job.

▲ Make sure the contractor is licensed and insured to install septic systems in Rhode Island.

▲ Discuss the job with, or request bids from, two or more contractors to get a realistic idea of the costs. Be sure the bids are based on the same scope of work and system components. There should be a design plan upon which the contractors can study and base their bid. Be sure the contractor is specifying components that are called for in the plan. If a new septic tank is being installed, be sure the contractor warrants that it is watertight. Refer to URI Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet “How to Order and Buy a Septic Tank” for more information on septic tanks. All contractors should specify a tank according to the information provided in this fact sheet.

▲ Before selecting a contractor, ask for references and check the references to see how previous jobs have gone. Did the contractor do what was promised and were any problems or discrepancies promptly corrected?

▲ The installation procedure should be spelled out in the contract and the costs and payment schedule should be clearly defined. The bid procedure should include a list of components, as well as any proposed finish landscaping or property restoration the contractor will provide.

▲ If the system is an enhanced treatment system, has the contractor installed this type of system before? If not, does he/she have a resource to help him/her through the installation such as the product supplier or manufacturer? Most product suppliers have technical staff



*Your contractor should install access risers to grade on your septic tank.*

For More Information: Technical Assistance, training programs and information. URI Cooperative Extension’s On-Site Wastewater Training Center George Loomis, Program Director, (401) 874-4558, [gloomis@uri.edu](mailto:gloomis@uri.edu) David Kalen, Program Manager, (401) 874-5950, [david.kalen@mail.uri.edu](mailto:david.kalen@mail.uri.edu) Website: [www.uri.edu/ce/wq](http://www.uri.edu/ce/wq)



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to help with installations. There may be a fee for this service, and it should be understood ahead of time who is responsible for that fee.

The conditions for any contract cost adjustments should be clear before the contract is signed. Unexpected site conditions such as the need to blast or hammer ledge where none was indicated before excavation could constitute a problem that warrants additional cost. It is important for the contractor to outline and write into the contract situations where an unplanned increase in the price of the system would occur before the contract is signed. Another potential for additional costs is the need to retrofit plumbing inside the house or to re-direct the building sewer. Be sure the responsibility for these costs are spelled out in the contract.



*The seam of this concrete septic tank is sealed with a butyl strip that provides additional assurance that it is watertight. The inlet and outlet have cast in place rubber boots with stainless steel clamps.*

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