

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Summit County Public Health  
Water Quality Program

Phone: 330.926.5600

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**Address:**

1867 W. Market St.  
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## Tips for maintaining your septic system:

1. All septic systems require routine maintenance.
2. All septic systems should be pumped regularly.
3. Mechanical septic systems should have a service contract with a licensed service provider.
4. Use water efficiently.
5. Don't dispose of household drugs or other hazardous wastes in your sinks or toilets.
6. Do not drive or build on or near your septic components.
7. Have your septic system inspected by professionals on a regular basis to check for leaks or mechanical malfunctions.
8. Additives are not necessary for proper function. Some chemicals additives can harm your septic system.
9. Contact your local health department if you have questions about taking care of your septic system.

## The Effects of Failing Septic Systems on Surface Water Quality

SUMMIT COUNTY  
PUBLIC HEALTH



**How to prevent your home septic system from contaminating our lakes and streams.**



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# Home Septic Systems' Effect on Surface Water Quality

Home septic systems are the most commonly reported source of groundwater contamination in the United States. Groundwater consists of any water found beneath the earth's surface, which may include the septic system discharge.

Surface water is ultimately impacted by anything that affects groundwater. Surface water primarily consists of lakes, rivers, and streams.

Neighborhoods with many septic systems may have high nitrogen levels in surface water. These high levels can create water quality problems and pollution of fresh water.



## Routine Inspections

Septic systems are recommended to be routinely maintained and inspected for functionality. Summit County Public Health performs several types of septic system inspections to ensure adequate water quality.

It is required that septic systems are inspected prior to sale of a house. Point of Sale inspections can be done by Summit County Public Health inspectors, or by a private inspector registered with our office.

## Nutrient Loading

Septic systems deliver significant amounts of nutrients to surface water and groundwater. Most of these nutrients are nitrogen and phosphorus.

The inability to treat nitrogen is one of the major weaknesses of modern septic systems. The presence of nitrogen in rivers, streams, and lakes can have negative ecological effects including algae blooms, loss of water clarity, and lowered oxygen levels in the water. Oxy-

gen in the water is important for fish and other aquatic life.

Septic systems are better at treating phosphorus. Phosphorus is an important plant nutrient for converting sunlight into usable energy. A balance of nitrogen & phosphorus is necessary for maintaining healthy aquatic life.



Failing septic systems pollute local lakes, rivers, and streams.

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## SUMMIT COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH

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