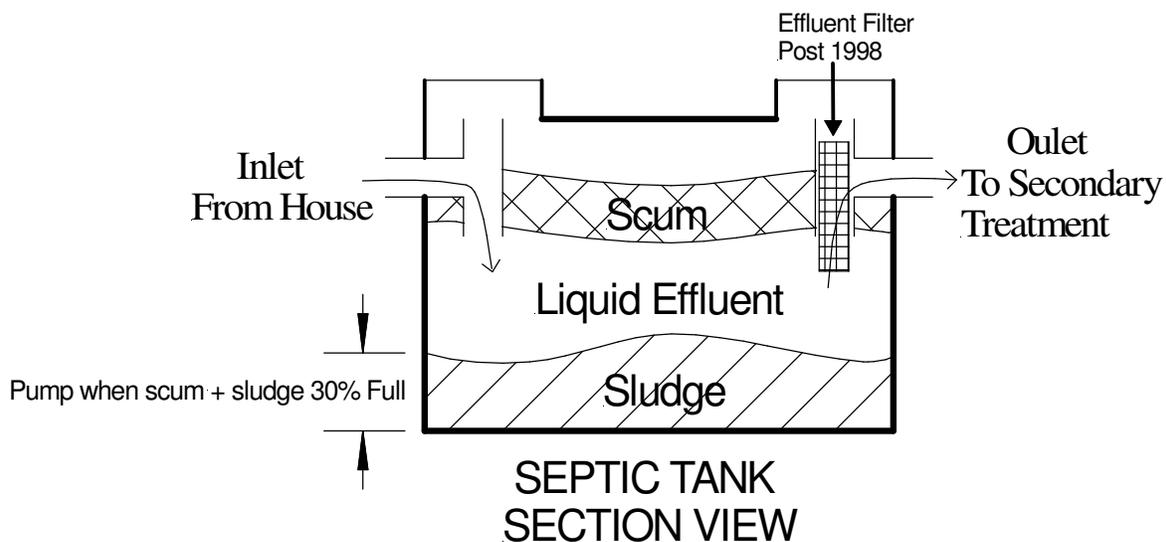


Pumping Septic Tanks

A normally functioning septic tank provides primary treatment of wastewater, which includes the separation of wastewater into three layers and the partial digestion of sludge by anaerobic bacteria. Sludge continues to build up at the bottom of the septic tank over time, despite the anaerobic digestion of some solids. At the same time, the layer of scum on top of the wastewater continues to grow thicker. The continual growth of these two layers effectively reduces the storage capacity of the tank and shrinks the middle liquid layer of wastewater. As this happens, wastewater flows more rapidly through the tank, which means there is less time for the wastewater to settle out solids and separate scum from the liquid. Unless there is adequate space in the septic tank for wastewater to separate into layers, solids and scum will float out of the tank and into the lateral field. Eventually, the septic field will clog and need replaced. Pumping tank when sludge and scum levels reach 30% of tank capacity is recommended to extend the life of septic system.



Tips to save money on pumping frequency septic system replacement

- **Minimize use of garbage disposal**
- **Place trashcan near drains so the following items do not go to septic.**
 - **harsh chemicals, sanitary napkins, latex products, cigarettes, food scrapes, fats, oils, greases, coffee grounds, paper towels, and plastic wraps**

*All septic systems installed in Dallas County since 1998 were required to have in-line or effluent filters. The purpose of the filters was to catch suspended solids from entering your septic field. The effluent filter should be removed every 6 months, hosed off and placed back into the septic tank. Failure to do this could result in sewage backing up into your house.

For more information contact me at toby.welch@dallascountyiowa.gov or 993-6823.