

Central Frontenac Septic Maintenance & Assessment Program Explained

In 2013, the Council of the Township of Central Frontenac formed the Septic Re-Inspection Committee of Council whose mandate is to investigate the possibility of having all septic systems in the township inspected. The objectives for this inspection program are to protect human health (to prevent the migration of harmful bacteria to drinking water sources), the environment (to prevent the migration of unwanted nutrients into our lakes and rivers) and the economy (to help maintain healthy water resources).

After 4 years of work, the Septic Re-Inspection Committee has designed and recommended the Central Frontenac Septic System Maintenance and Assessment Program. This program would be a low cost, efficient and effective way to have all the septic systems in the township assessed for functionality within a reasonable amount of time. Although the primary objective of the program is to have systems assessed, secondary benefits will be education and maintenance.

This program will be rolled out in 2 phases. In Phase 1, pumpers and haulers will be licensed and trained to do assessments on septic systems. During the pump out, they will do a quick visual assessment, leave a copy of the assessment with the homeowner and will send a copy to the township. They will also leave an educational pamphlet on the proper use and maintenance of a septic system.

Systems will be assessed as green, yellow or red. A green designation means that the system is working properly and that the homeowner does not have to do anything. A yellow designation means that the system needs minor maintenance or repairs. With a yellow designation, the township would follow up with phone calls enquiring whether recommended repairs or maintenance have been completed. If not, the homeowner would be encouraged to do the repair or maintenance. A red designation means that, in the opinion of the pumper/hauler, the system has failed or is failing. With a red designation, Public Health would be notified and they will follow their own protocols to ensure the system is functioning properly.

Using the pumper/haulers to do the visual assessment will be the most cost effective method for homeowners to have an assessment done. The pumper/hauler will already be on site, the system will be accessible and so assessment will take only a couple of extra minutes of the pumper/hauler's time.

Pumper/haulers were contacted regarding the proposed program. Cost estimates to do the assessment and send a report to the township ranged from \$25 – \$100; that is, 2 pumpers estimated their fee at \$25, one pumper said \$100 and the other pumpers contacted were between these 2 estimates.

If homeowners do not want to have their septic tank pumped out, another option will be available. An assessment from a qualified agent will also be accepted. However, with this option, the important maintenance of a pump out will not be done. Cost estimates for a stand alone inspection range from \$95 (plus transportation) – \$300.

Phase 2 will start five years after the implementation of Phase 1. Homeowners who have not had an assessment of their septic system filed with the municipality will be contacted by the township and encouraged to have their tanks pumped and/or an assessment made. Failure to do so within a reasonable time will result in a mandatory inspection authorized under the Ontario Building Code Act.

There are many natural factors that may influence the quality of our water (excessive sulphur or salt, naturally occurring run-off etc.) which are beyond the influence of municipal government. By implementing this program however, Central Frontenac will be doing what it can to protect our most important natural resource from a widely used man-made source; our on-site septic systems.

For more details about the Septic Maintenance and Assessment Program, please refer to the Septic System Maintenance and Assessment Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) - available in the Septic Sense section on the main page of the Central Frontenac home page (centralfrontenac.com).

Questions, comments, concerns and suggestions can be sent to:
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