

"Serving Santa Cruz County for 20 Years"



DURING HEAVY RAINS

Septic System Problems & Solutions

Boulder Creek (831) 338-4834

Aptos (831) 668-1329

Watsonville (831) 726-0167

Many septic systems don't function correctly when we are experiencing heavy rain in Santa Cruz County. This is due to the water tables rising, surface run off, and direct saturation from rain. Sometimes the ground water is as shallow as 3' to 5' in some areas.

Most septic systems are made up of a SEPTIC TANK which consists of two compartments, an INLET or SOLID CHAMBER and an OUTLET or LIQUID chamber, and a DRAINFIELD that is connected to the OUTLET end of the SEPTIC TANK. The DRAINFIELD usually consists of a trench in the ground filled with drain rock and a perforated pipe towards the top of the trench. This perforated pipe is connected to the outlet pipe that is connected to the outlet chamber of the SEPTIC TANK.

During heavy rains or long periods of constant rain, as the ground water rises, it infiltrates the drainfield trench. Along with the water that is used in the house and the ground water and direct rain, and the surface run off, the DRAINFIELD becomes totally saturated. At that point the plumbing usually backs up to the place of least resistance, which unfortunately is usually the lowest place in the house, like a shower stall or a bath tub. When this happens, many people think they have a clog in the main line because nothing wants to drain. **SNAKING THE LINE WILL NOT ELEVATE THE PROBLEM! – YOU NEED TO PUMP THE SEPTIC TANK TO REMOVE THE EXCESS WATER.**

If you think you are experiencing this problem, call us as soon as you can. Because so many people experience this problem at the same time, it is not a good idea to wait till afternoon to call and expect a pump truck the same day, because any calls we take after 4pm are considered "Emergency Calls" and will carry with them an "Emergency After Hours Rate". This is especially important if it is a Friday afternoon, because the treatment plant shuts down at 6pm for the entire weekend so there is no place to dump until Monday at 6am.