



# From The Home Inspector

## Notes from Septic Tank Presentation

September 13, 2011

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Certification Board

- Although septic tanks are not required to be pumped before an inspection currently, this is strongly recommended
- New rules soon to be passed will clarify exactly what should be done in an inspection
- Inspectors are required to inspect all components, identify the placement (including distance from property lines and wells) and identify the source of water for the home
- Inspectors cannot fail a septic tank – only the local Environment of Health can do this
- Inspections protect buyers and sellers (buyers so they know the condition of the septic tank; sellers so the deal doesn't fall through at the last moment)
- Installers must be certified: their certification number should have four digits and end in "I"; they should have a card
- Septic tanks should be pumped every 3 – 5 years, more often if the family is large or there is major illness in the family (like cancer, kidney dialysis or organ transplant)
- Yeast and vinegar in the kitchen sink improve a septic tank
- You can have a garbage disposal with a septic tank but the tank should be larger to accommodate the additional mass
- Straight piping (piping grey water directly onto the ground or into a source of water) is illegal in NC
- Inspectors cannot give warranties or predictions because they don't know if the tank will be properly maintained or if the size of the family will increase
- Drain fields should not have plants, trees or bushes
- Dye tests are not recommended because of the stress on the system
- Counties vary in how long they maintain septic tank information on file and how complete the information is

- You are not currently required to have a septic tank inspection (except for some government backed loans) but if you do have an inspection, the inspector must be certified



Thank you to Connie Stephens for speaking with us about septic tank issues!

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