

# SepticSmart Do's and Don'ts for an Advanced Treatment Unit (ATU)



## What is an ATU?

An Advanced Treatment Unit (ATU) is a device that provides additional treatment for wastewater beyond what a traditional septic system can provide. It typically includes a second tank with a filter and aeration system to break down solids and organic matter, resulting in cleaner effluent that can be safely discharged into the environment.

## Why would I need or want an ATU/AOWTS versus a traditional septic system?

You may need or want an ATU/AOWTS for several reasons:
 

- Water Quality:** ATUs provide higher quality effluent, which is beneficial for protecting surface water and groundwater.
- Space Constraints:** ATUs are often more compact than traditional septic systems, making them ideal for smaller lots.
- Regulatory Requirements:** Some localities or water bodies have specific requirements for effluent quality that only an ATU can meet.
- Long-Term Protection:** ATUs can help prevent the release of nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus, which can cause environmental problems like algal blooms.

## What is the required maintenance?

Regular maintenance is crucial for the proper operation of an ATU. Key tasks include:
 

- Filter Maintenance:** The filter in the ATU tank must be cleaned or replaced regularly to prevent clogging.
- Inspection:** Have a professional inspect the ATU and the entire septic system at least once a year.
- Record Keeping:** Keep a log of all maintenance activities, including dates and what was done.
- Proper Use:** Avoid pouring harsh chemicals, grease, and non-biodegradable items down the drain.
- Water Conservation:** Reducing water usage helps prevent overloading the system.

## Follow Septic Sam's do's and don'ts:

### Don't:

- Turn off any air supply device, alarm or electrical component of the system.
- Bypass the system.
- Modify, cover or move any system components without prior approval from the service provider.
- Pump the ATU without service provider approval or supervision.

### Do:

- Use soaps and detergents that are low-suds, biodegradable, and low- or phosphate-free.
- Fix leaky fixtures.
- Use low-flow fixtures.
- Use liquid fabric softener instead of dryer sheets.

For more SepticSmart tips, visit [www.epa.gov/septicSMART](http://www.epa.gov/septicSMART)