Hamilton Source Protection Septic Social

April 28, 2026

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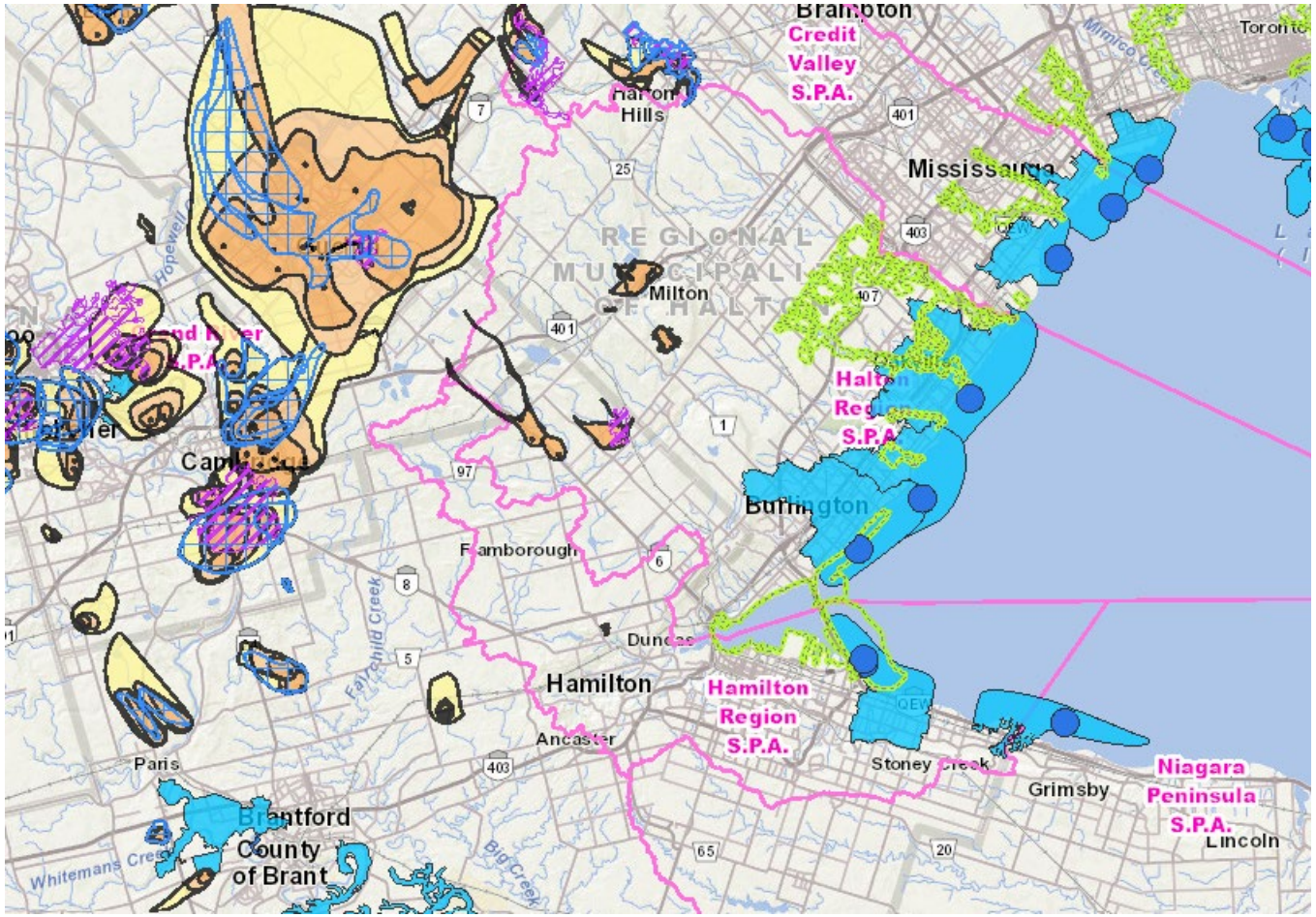
Today's Agenda

- Source Water Protection Program
- Overview of the City of Hamilton's Septic System Inspection Program
- How your sewage system works
- How the Inspection Program works
- Do's and Don'ts
- Final Tips for good sewage system operation

Source Water Protection Program

- First step in a multi-barrier approach to protecting drinking water sources such as lakes, rivers and groundwater BEFORE they become depleted or contaminated
- Identifies vulnerable features of our drinking water sources such as municipal well heads or surface water intake zones
- Delineates protection areas around these vulnerable features and identifies threats to water sources

Source Protection Information Atlas



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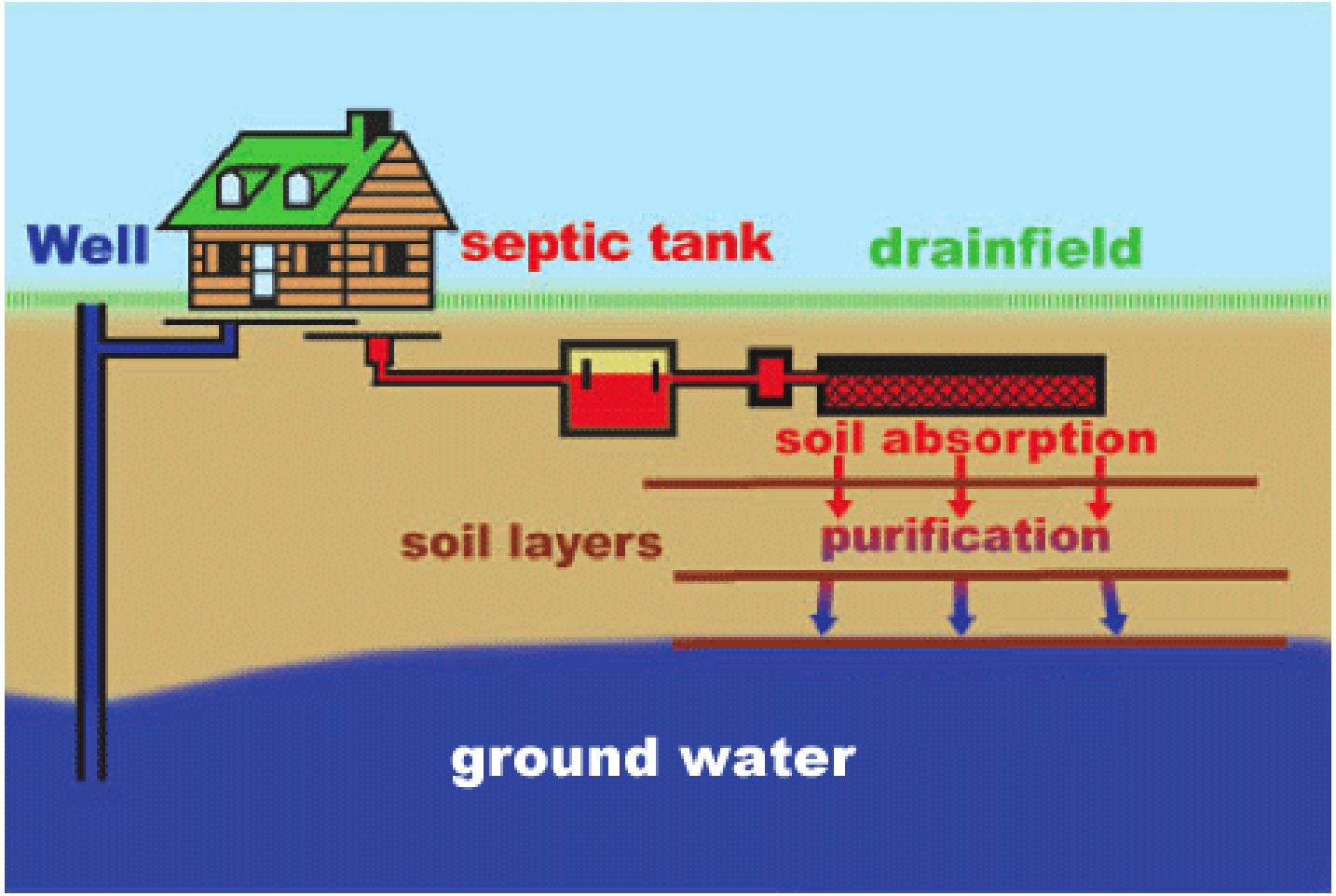
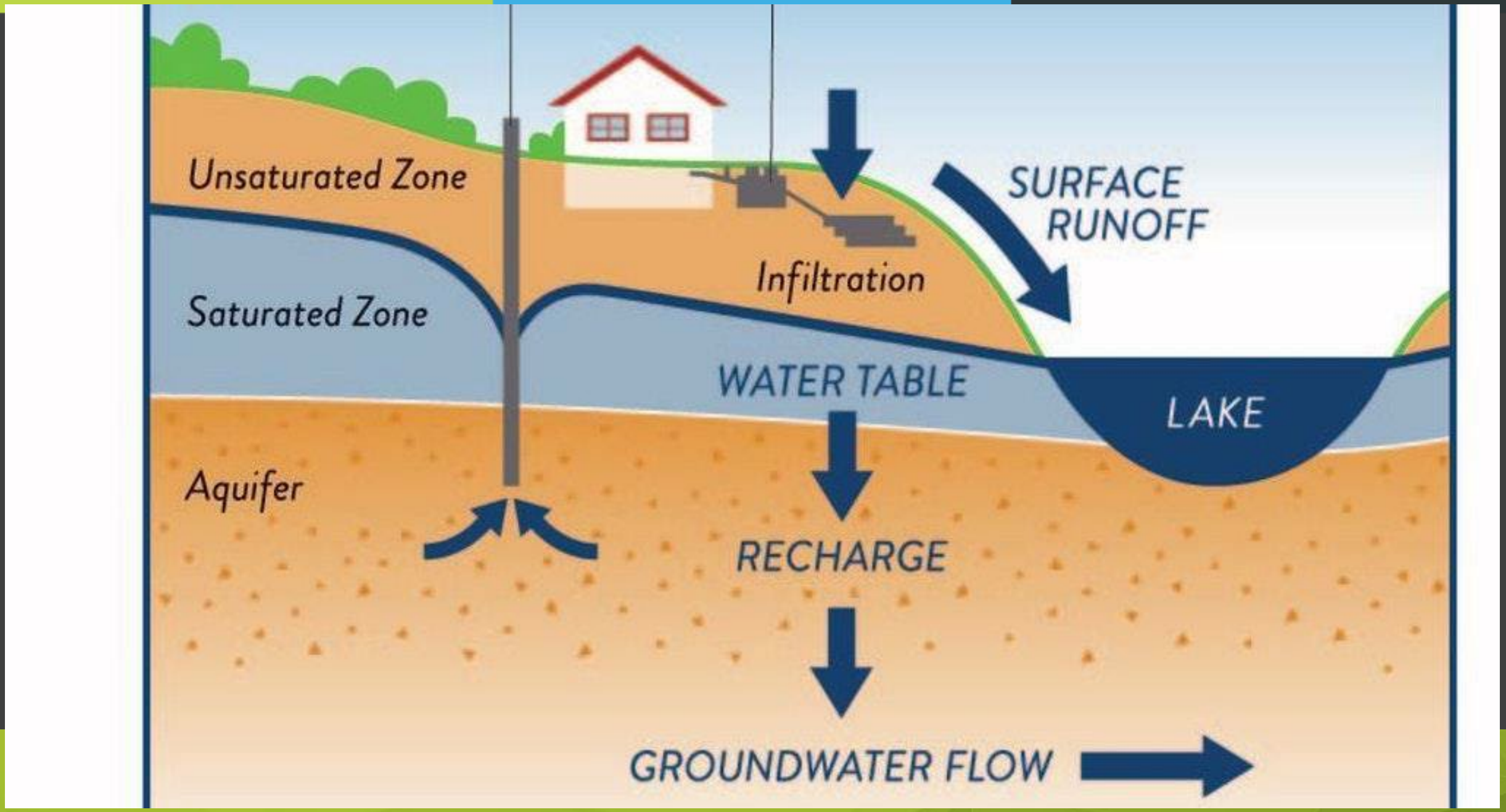
Septic System Inspection Program

- Mandatory inspection program for properties located in **highly vulnerable municipal wellhead protection** areas
- Sewage systems must be inspected every five years

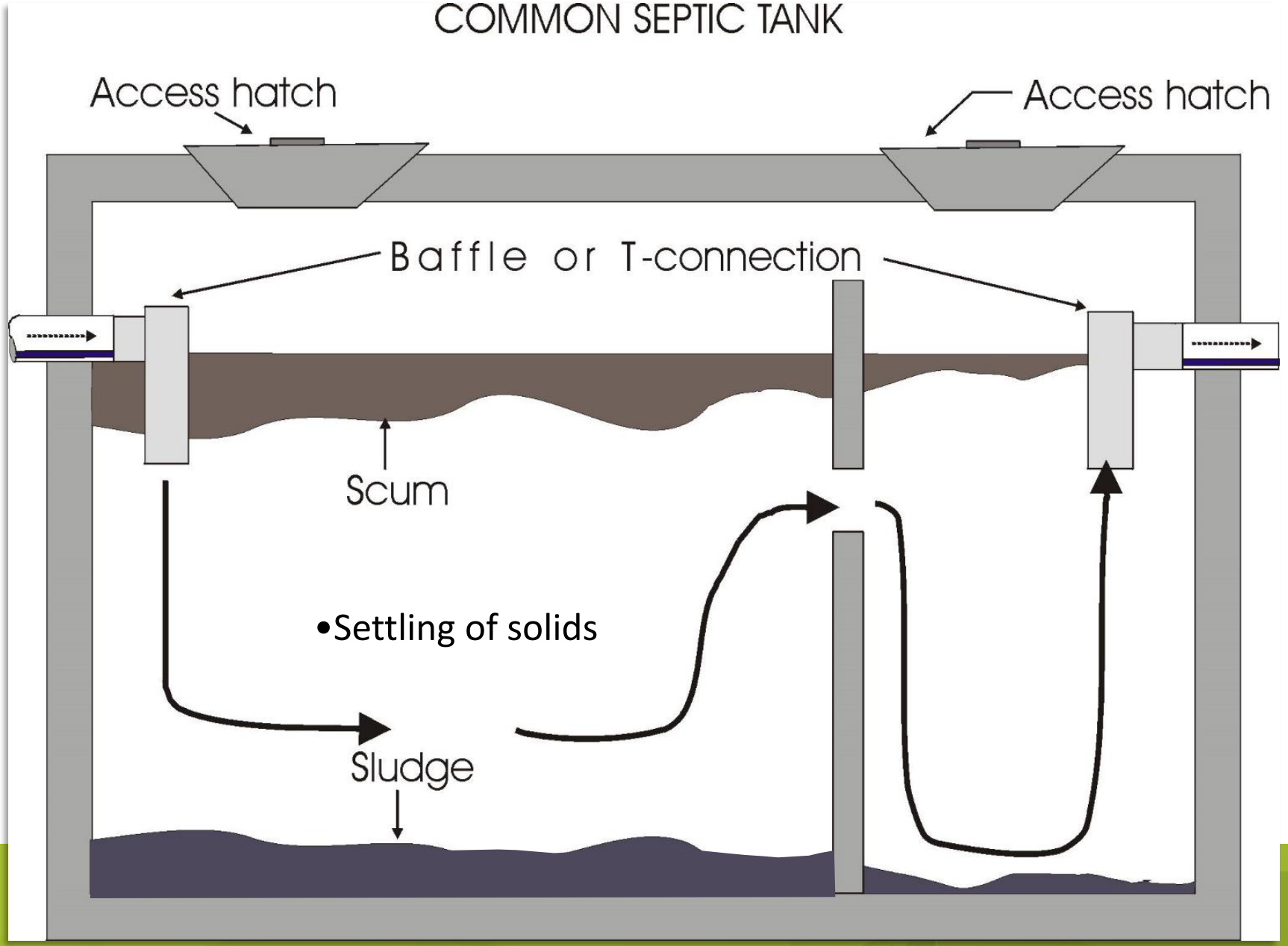
On-Site Sewage Systems




Unsaturated Zone
Saturated Zone
Aquifer
Infiltration
SURFACE RUNOFF
WATER TABLE
LAKE
RECHARGE
GROUNDWATER FLOW

Septic Tanks

- Almost every system will have a septic tank
- Main function is to provide enough time and space to settle out solids and to store the solids for some period of time
- Tanks MUST be pumped out from time to time


COMMON SEPTIC TANK
Access hatch
Access hatch
Baffle or T-connection
Scum
•Settling of solids
Sludge

Things to Look for:

- Well fitting lids
- Water level in the tank
- Scum and solids build up
- Corrosion

Septic Tank

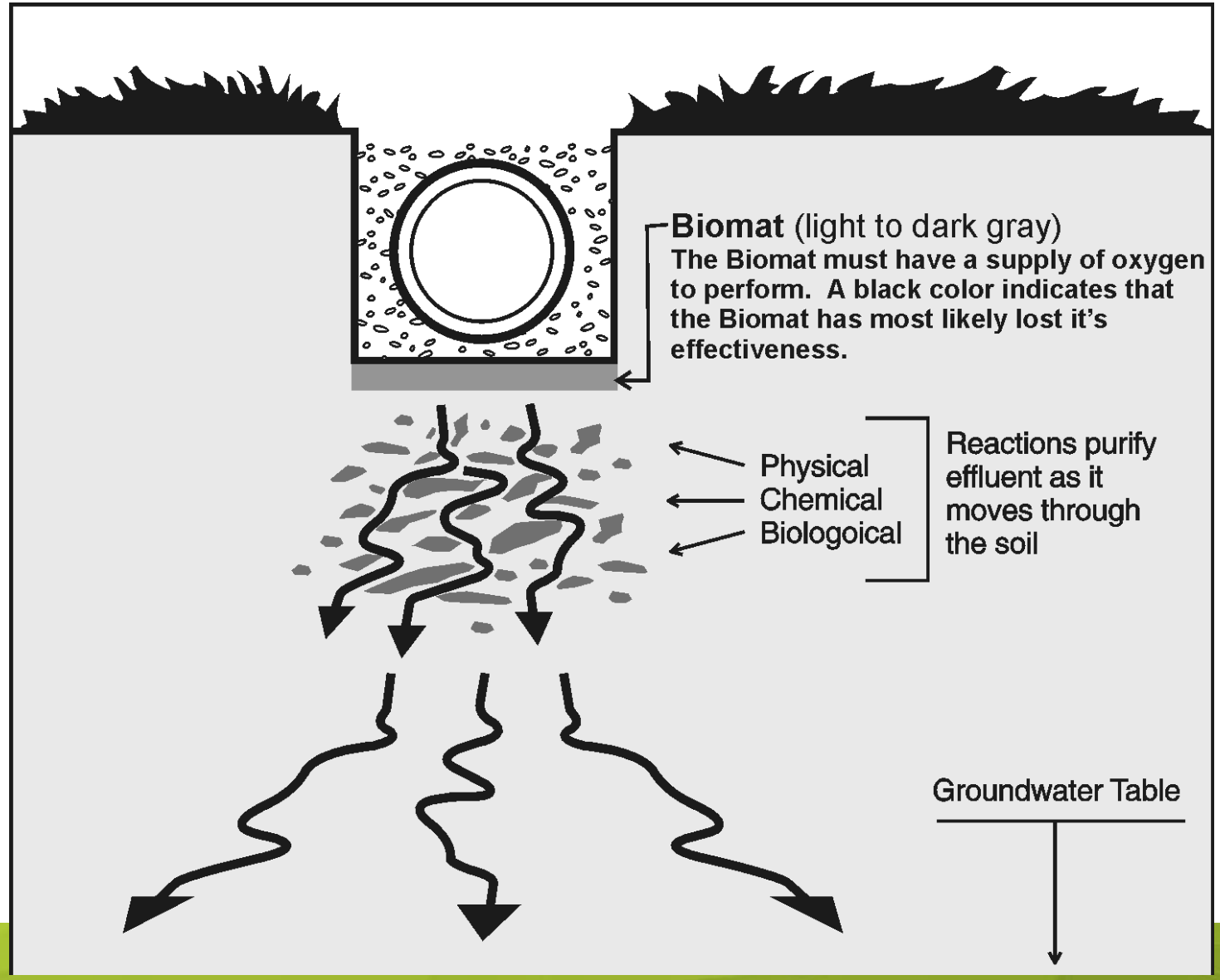
Inlet or Outlet?

Effluent Filters

- Required on all new installations
- Recommended for older tanks – can be retrofitted
- Plastic screen that fits in the "outlet" tee
- Strains out solids that remain in suspension before effluent gets to the leaching bed
- Must be cleaned every 6 – 12 months – remove it and hose it off!

Leaching Bed

- Everybody's got one!
- This is where the "MAGIC" happens!
- Series of perforated pipes set in clear stone
- May be in the native soils or in fill – raised
- Sandy soils are best, heavier soils = larger systems



Things to look for on your leaching bed

- Drainage and grading away from the bed
- Wet spots/patches
- Trees around or on the bed

As systems age problems may begin to occur

- Root intrusion
- Soil in pipes
- Biomat build up

How the Program Works

- Property owner gets a notice
- Property owner hires a professional to complete the inspection
  - OOWA
  - OASIS
- Professional inspects the sewage system
- Complete any repairs requires
- Submit Inspection Documentation (by professional)

- Intent of the program is to ensure systems are **safe**
- Signs of failure might include:
  - Breakout or soft spots on the leaching bed
  - Tank overflowing
  - Tank risers in poor condition
- Generally not a "code compliance" type of inspection

Inspection Form

Hamilton
Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5
Phone: 905-546-2720
septic.systems@hamilton.ca

Septic System Inspection Report

Company Name:	
Company Address:	
Technicians Name:	BCIN:
Date of Inspection:	Time of inspection: AM ◉ PM ◯
Property Information	
Owner Name	
Municipal Address (subject property)	
Mailing Address (if different from above)	
Phone Number: ( ) -	E-mail:
Type of Building: ☐ Single Family Dwelling | ☐ Multi-Family Dwelling | ☐ SFD with Commercial | ☐ Commercial | ☐ Other:	
Water Supply: ☐ Municipal well | ☐ Dug well | ☐ Drilled well | ☐ Cistern	
Septic System Information:	
Type of system: ☐ Class 4 | ☐ Treatment Unit | ☐ Holding tank	
Tank pumped: ☐Y ☐N **Tank Size:** Litres (estimated) **Tank Material:** ☐ Concrete | ☐ Plastic | ☐ Fiberglass | ☐ Steel | ☐ Other: **Number of Chambers:** ☐ 1 | ☐ 2 | ☐ Other **Condition:** ☐ Good | ☐ Requires remedial measures **Inlet Condition:** ☐ Good | ☐ Requires remedial measures **Outlet Condition:** ☐ Good | ☐ Requires remedial measures	
Effluent Filter: ☐Y ☐N **Condition:** ☐ Good | ☐ Requires remedial measures	
***Pump chamber:** ☐Y ☐N **Material:** ☐ Concrete | ☐ Plastic | ☐ Fiberglass | ☐ Steel | ☐ Other: **Condition:** ☐ Good | ☐ Requires remedial measures * - If applicable pump chamber visual or audible alarm operational ☐Y ☐N	
Bed Design: based on ☐ records | ☐ visual appearance | ☐ property owner disclosure ☐ Standard trench | ☐ Shallow buried trench | ☐ Raised bed | ☐ Filter Bed | ☐ Other:	
Clearances: (appears to be in C – In Compliance or NC – Not in Compliance) **Septic tank** – Structures ☐C ☐NC | Well ☐C ☐NC | Waterways ☐C ☐NC | Property Line ☐C ☐NC **Distribution pipe** – Structures ☐C ☐NC | Well ☐C ☐NC | Waterways ☐C ☐NC | Property Line ☐C ☐NC	
Observations: Sewage effluent visible ☐Y ☐N | Sewage odour present ☐Y ☐N | Saturation of tile bed area ☐Y ☐N Overgrown vegetation near bed ☐Y ☐N | Other:	

- Inspection Certificate

- Email to septic.systems@hamilton.ca

City of Hamilton
Building Division
City Hall, 3rd Floor
71 Main Street West
Hamilton, ON L8P 4Y5
Phone: 905-546-2720
septic.systems@hamilton.ca

CERTIFICATE

Mandatory sewage system
maintenance inspection program

(pursuant to Article 1.10.2.5 of Division C of the Building Code)

A. Certificate Information

Certificate number: _____

Date certificate issued: _____

Address of Property on which Sewage System is located

(hereinafter called the "Property"): _____

Owner of Property on which Sewage System is located: _____

Certificate issued to (name and address of Principal Authority): _____

B. Information of person signing certificate

Name: _____

Address: _____

Business telephone number: _____

Building Code Identification Number (BCIN) (if applicable): _____

I certify that:

1. I am a person described in Sentence 1.10.1.3.(3) of Division C of the Building Code.
2. I have conducted an inspection of the sewage system located at the Property.
3. I am satisfied on reasonable grounds that the sewage system located on the Property is in compliance with the requirements of Section 8.9 of Division B of the Building Code.

C. Certificate issued by

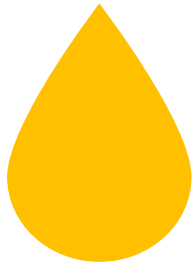
Do:

- Know where your septic system and leaching bed are located
- Keep the tank access lid secure
- Maintain records of inspections and maintenance
- Pump the septic tank when sludge reaches one-third of the tank volume
- Inspect the tank every 3–5 years
- Test well water three times per year
- Divert surface water away from the leaching bed
- Spread laundry loads throughout the week

Don't:

- Enter a septic tank (hazardous gases can be fatal)
- Pour oils, grease, chemicals, or medications down the drain
- Flush sanitary products or cigarette butts
- Drive or park vehicles over the system
- Plant trees or shrubs nearby
- Direct sump pumps, roof drains, or stormwater into the system

Final Tips



Be mindful of your sewage system

What are you putting "into" it?

Watch your water use

What else is going down the drain?

What are you putting "on" it?

Minimize over-compacting soils on bed

Trees and shrubs – think about those roots

What should I do?

Clean your effluent filter every 6 – 12 months

Have your tank pumped out every 3 – 5 years

Get your system inspected

Questions?

- Look for more information at www.hamilton.ca/home-neighbourhood/water-wastewater-stormwater/water-treatment-distribution/source-water-1
- Google Hamilton Septic System Inspection Program