

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

As the owner/resident, what am I responsible for?

- Repairing and maintaining the home plumbing and sewer line from the house to the STEP system tank.
- Maintain access to City equipment. Bushes and fences that block access will be removed.
- Damages to the septic tank, control panel, or City owned equipment if the damage is caused by the home owner or some one other than City personnel.
- Providing electricity for the pump and controls.
- Calling to report an alarm, and minimizing water use during an emergency.
- Eliminating the disposal of improper material into the STEP system.
- Pumping out solids from septic tank every 5 years to prevent solids from entering the sewer system.

Why must my tank riser lid be visible?

The riser is the access to your pump and allows us to act quickly during an emergency. A hidden or inaccessible lid means that your STEP system cannot be serviced. Tank lids must remain visible and must NOT be covered by sod, shrubs, or bark—please maintain a 24-inch clearance.

- Can I hide my alarm box? No. You must maintain a 3-foot clearance around and in front of the electrical (alarm) box. This means no shrubs or fences can block the box. Technicians must access the box to perform routine and emergency maintenance.

What is the City of New Bern responsible for?

The City of New Bern is responsible for maintaining and repairing/replacing the electrical pumps, floats, pressure bells, (alarm) box, and service lines from the tank to the main sewer line.



CITY OF NEW BERN
ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
PO Box 1129
NEW BERN, NC 28562

CONTACT INFORMATION:

To report an alarm
Mon-Fri 8:00-4:30 call
252-639-7541

For after hours, weekends
and holidays call
252-636-4070



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Photography by John Williams

CITY OF NEW BERN

*What you need
to know about your
Sewer STEP System...*





STEP INFORMATION

STEP stands for Septic Tank Effluent Pump. Most customers' household waste goes directly into our sewer collection pipes; waste from customers on STEP systems doesn't. Instead, household wastewater spends time in a septic tank before heading out to the main sewer collection lines.

How does my STEP System work?

Your STEP system includes a septic tank, pump tank, pump, and control panel. The liquid waste that would normally go to the drain field in a regular septic tank is pumped through a small pressure line into sewer lines leading to the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

The STEP system pump is controlled by a system of floats within your tank. The electrical box mounted on the side of your house controls the floats and pumps. The floats activate an alarm in the electrical (alarm) box when the fluid level in the tank gets too high or too low.

STEP SYSTEM CARE

Think before you flush or wash certain items down the drain. Why? Because flushing or disposal of certain items down your drain increases your chances of system failure. Disposal of the below listed items can block your system. Do Not flush the following items down the drain (including toilets):

- Disposable diapers
- Egg shells, nutshells and coffee grounds
- Sanitary napkins, tampons, condoms, or any non-organic material
- Paper towels or rags
- Hair
- Dental Floss
- Food items containing seeds and peelings
- Fats, oils and greases
- Limit or eliminate your use of garbage disposal. Instead, consider composting your food waste items.

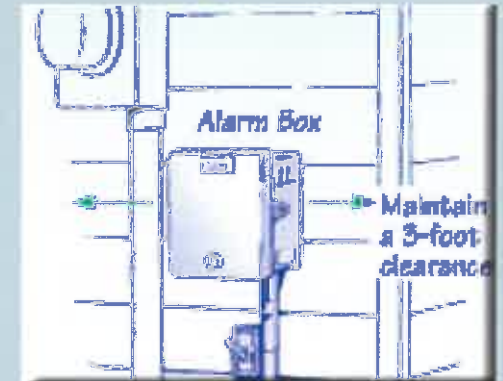
STEP Alarms & Maintenance

Routine maintenance of a STEP system is the City's responsibility. But if extra maintenance or cleaning is required due to disposal of inappropriate materials, the maintenance cost may be billed directly to the property owner or resident.

What to do when alarm is activated?

1. Locate the box. The alarm box is located on a post or on an exterior wall of your home. The alarm sounds similar to a smoke alarm, making a high-pitched, buzzing sound. Depending on your box location, you may or may not be able to hear the alarm inside your home.

2. Push the red-lit button or for the newer alarm boxes place your hand on the hand-print. This will silence the alarm. The red light will stay on as long as there is an alarm condition.
3. Call to report the emergency immediately in order to avoid an overflow for the system.



4. Conserve water. After you call be sure to conserve water. STEP systems are designed to store extra wastewater equal to a normal 24-hour flow for a family of three. Curtail water use to prevent overflow of the holding tank and your home's plumbing system.

- Take shorter showers
- Don't use the washing machine
- Minimizing toilet flushing

