



*Pump your tank to prevent sewage backups until power is restored.*

Be sure to check out the EPA website shown below and learn more about being SepticSmart.

<https://www.epa.gov/septic/septic-smart-homeowners>

Additional guidance for septic systems before, during and after power outages can be obtained from the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)

<https://www.neha.org/essential-services/septic-systems-power-outages>

## Our Mission

The staff of the Environmental Health Bureau is dedicated to safeguarding the residents and resources of Monterey County by providing services that help promote responsible business practices, by providing educational opportunities to industry workers and the public, and when necessary, by enforcing Environmental Health principles and law.

### Sources

Mecklenburg County Environmental Health, North Carolina

National Environmental Health Association (NEHA)

Texas A&M Agrilife Extension

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)



### MONTEREY COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH BUREAU

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## MONTEREY COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH BUREAU

*Onsite Wastewater Treatment  
Systems (OWTS) & Power  
Outages*



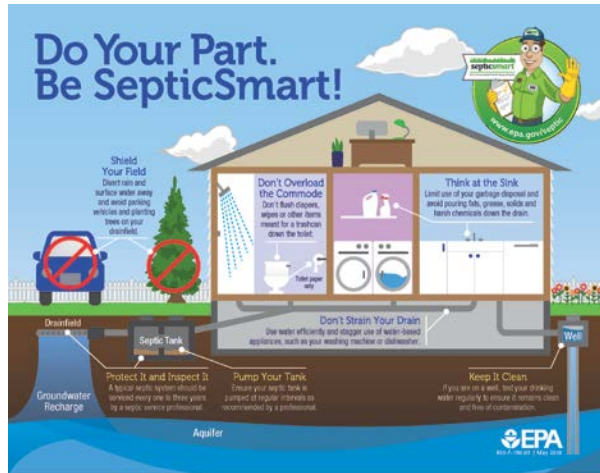
Photo by Bryan Escamilla, REHS

## The power is out!

Be wary during power outages, especially if you have a septic system with electrical components like an Alternative Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (AOWTS) or pump vault/ chamber.

- Limit how much water you use during the outage. Significantly reduce the frequency of bathing, laundry and dishwashing until power is restored.
- Pump vaults/ chambers permitted in Monterey County are designed to have surge capacity/ reserve storage for exactly this purpose.

- If your plumbing does start to drain slowly, there may be no more storage available and you should contact a licensed liquid waste hauler to pump out your tank(s)



## The power may be back on, but don't celebrate too early!

Limit water use for the days following the outage to give your system the opportunity to recover.

The power may be back on, but your septic system may not be operating normally.

- Continue to limit water use for the days following the outage.

- If your system is equipped with a high water alarm, do not deactivate it.
- You may silence the alarm if you have the option but allow it to operate as intended. The alarm should deactivate on its own as the operating level returns to normal. If the alarm remains activated for more than 24 hours, you should contact your service provider.
- Use caution when manually dosing/ pumping to the dispersal system as you may overload the system.

### **Do not continue to use water if the sewage has backed up into the house**

If sewage has backed up into the house or there is evidence of surfacing effluent near the septic system, contact a Qualified Professional and remove and discard contaminated household goods that cannot be sanitized. Wear rubber boots and waterproof gloves when cleaning up.

### **SepticSmart Homeowners**

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) offers lots of resources for homeowners to learn more about their septic systems and how to take care of them.