SEPTICS — GUIDE

How to choose a septic company

Check the right credential, ask about your system and compare written scopes.

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Choose for the task your system needs. Pumping, buyer inspections, installation, drain field repair and aerobic unit maintenance have different scopes. EPA advises owners to contact their local authority for information about licensed professionals. [US EPA, Frequent Questions on Septic Systems, accessed 2026-11-10.]

Define the job

Write a short request with the property location, system type if known, reason for service and available records. Say whether you need routine pumping, a condition report or diagnosis of a fault. If there is sewage at the surface or inside the home, describe it before booking.

Ask whether the company serves the address and works on that system type. A nearby office does not prove coverage. Ask who will attend and whether another contractor will perform any part of the work.

Check credentials at the source

Ask for the credential type, number and issuing agency. Check the exact name and current status with that agency. Ask the local authority which role the work needs. Oregon DEQ, for example, lists separate Pumper, Installer and combined licenses. Texas TCEQ also lists distinct installer and maintenance roles. [Oregon DEQ and TCEQ, accessed 2026-11-10.]

Association membership and training may give useful context. They do not substitute for the authorization required for the actual work. A directory badge does not establish that authorization either.

Compare the scope in writing

Ask what access, pumping, disposal, inspection and reporting the quote includes. Ask what remains untested. Agree on who can authorize extra work. For proposed repairs, request the defect evidence and ask about permits before excavation begins.

Penn State Extension distinguishes tank pumping from a comprehensive inspection. If you are buying a home, ask the inspector and purchase adviser what report you need. Do not treat a pump receipt as a complete inspection.

Keep the result

Ask for an itemized invoice, findings, photos where useful and the next service recommendation. Save these with the system plan. If a report contains a material unknown, ask how it can be resolved.

Septics records public business facts and owner updates. It does not inspect or recommend companies. Contact each company directly; lead routing is off.

Sources

All sources below were fetched and checked on 2026-11-10. That is the access date, not a claim about publication date.

- US EPA: Frequent Questions on Septic Systems, accessed 2026-11-10.
- Penn State Extension: Septic Tank Pumping, accessed 2026-11-10.
- Oregon DEQ: Onsite Licensing, accessed 2026-11-10.
- Texas TCEQ: OSSF occupational licenses, accessed 2026-11-10.

Frequently asked questions

Does a paid directory badge prove technical competence?

No. Check the issuing agency, relevant experience and written scope yourself.