



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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DEM, URI ENCOURAGE RHODE ISLANDERS TO LEARN HOW TO PROPERLY MAINTAIN THEIR SEPTIC SYSTEMS DURING THE 2023 SEPTIC SMART WEEK, SEPT. 18 - 22

PROVIDENCE, RI – The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and University of Rhode Island (URI) are encouraging homeowners and businesses to learn how to properly use and maintain their septic systems during U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) annual [SepticSmart Week](#), which runs from Sept. 18 – 22 this year.

All septic systems must be maintained properly to treat wastewater effectively and protect environmental and human health. Staff from [URI's Onsite Wastewater Resource Center](#) (OWRC) and [DEM's Office of Water Resources' Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems \(OWTS\) Program](#), are holding a series of public workshops during SepticSmart week. These workshops will help homeowners better understand their septic systems and how to keep them working at their best to protect their family's health and the environment. In-person workshops are scheduled [on Sept. 21 from 6 PM-7 PM](#) at the Kettle Pond Visitor Center in Charlestown and [on Sept. 23 from 10 AM-11 AM](#) at URI's Peckham Farm in South Kingstown. [A third workshop will be held virtually](#) on Sept. 19 at 12:30 PM in partnership with [RCAP Solutions](#).



EPA's SepticSmart Program designates the third week of September each year as SepticSmart Week to bring attention to the importance of caring for and maintaining septic systems.

“With over 35% of homes and businesses in Rhode Island served by septic systems, it’s critical for Rhode Islanders to learn how to properly maintain their systems,” said DEM Director Terry Gray. “DEM works closely with septic system designers and installers to permit new septic systems and repairs to existing

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systems. However, proper maintenance is necessary to keep these systems running well for years and helps avoid costly repairs or replacements. The SepticSmart Week workshops held in collaboration with URI are great opportunities for participants to learn simple steps to keep their septic systems functioning properly, which helps protect homes, businesses, health, and our environment.”

“Workshop participants will learn about how their septic systems work and how to care for them - protecting their health, and their wallets, too,” said Dr. Alissa Cox, Director of URI’s Onsite Wastewater Resource Center. “Septic systems require regular maintenance, just like any other home utility. We are here to help homeowners understand that regular care and maintenance, as well as best practices, can save them money by prolonging their system’s lifespan. In addition, homeowners who visit our demonstration center at URI’s Peckham Farm on Saturday can see a variety of advanced septic system models to learn how they work and why they are so critical along the coast and in other nitrogen sensitive areas. We will also share tips on what to ask if you are considering an advanced system on your property.”

For more information or to register for the workshops, please visit URI’s OWRC’s website at <https://web.uri.edu/owt/upcoming-events/>, or call Lisa Hollister at 401-874-5950. For SepticSmart tips and resources developed by EPA for homeowners visit dem.ri.gov/septicmarthome and for businesses at dem.ri.gov/septicmart.

For more information on DEM programs and initiatives, visit www.dem.ri.gov. Follow [DEM on Facebook](#), Twitter (@RhodeIslandDEM), or Instagram (@rhodeisland.dem) for timely updates.

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