

TECH TALK

USEFUL INFORMATION RELATED TO SEPTIC TANKS

PROBLEM: Earth loading can overwhelm flimsy septic tanks !

Someday, probably on the worst possible day, a day when soils are completely saturated with water from falling rain or melting snow, your septic tank will fill up. Toilets will not flush, tubs will not drain, and you will call a plumber.

He will empty the tank. Now everything should be just fine. On this worst possible day, your tank is under tremendous pressure from wet soils pushing relentlessly downward and inward. This is no time for a flimsy septic tank.

All dirt is dumb. It does not differentiate between a concrete, fiberglass, or plastic tank. Do not expect a partially crushed tank to rebound back to its original shape and capacity. If the septic tank collapses, even if it bends a bit, the dirt continues to push. Make a bad choice when specifying the tank.....and today, the worst possible day, you will pay the penalty when your flimsy tank crushes under the weight of the soil.

SOLUTION: Performance testing prevents surprises....*designed right to be watertight !*

Any tank that can withstand 7 inches of vacuum or equivalent loading without collapse or deflection will survive that worst possible day with no problem.

All concrete septic tanks listed under the PCANY Certification Program for Water and Wastewater Products, as shown by the cast in red tag, have demonstrated structural soundness and watertightness. If properly installed and maintained, they will last a lifetime.

RECOMMENDATION:

Do not install a septic tank without a cast in red disk proving it is "PCANY Listed"



77,500# test load on top of a septic tank Septic tank vacuum test to 7" Hg (=500 psf force on all 6 sides)

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This is part of a series of commentaries related to septic tanks. Our goal is to inform. We welcome your participation, assistance, suggestion or complaint, as long as it is consistent with our stated objectives – to inform, instruct, assist or correct common misconceptions.

The Precast Concrete Association of New York (PCANY) is an organization of over 100 members. It has 31 concrete producers, 17 of which produce concrete septic tanks, and comprise the recently formed Septic Tank Group. Please read our Mission Statement: We, as a group of precast concrete septic tank producers, material suppliers, consulting engineers, regulators, inspectors, installers, contractors, and other interested parties, have the following mission:

- 1) To function as an industry group to create, adopt and manage an “Approved Manufacturers Certification Program”, in compliance with a specific Quality Control/Quality Assurance program, with a goal to produce and deliver precast concrete septic tanks that are watertight, are designed with a structural capacity appropriate for the installation, and which exhibit a high level of quality within all related manufactured products and their accessories, throughout New York State.
- 2) To promote and market the advantages to the earth’s environment in general and public health of New Yorkers in particular, and real estate values in participation, which become the resultant benefit of a mandatory program requiring proper installation exclusively of tanks listed under this Certification Program.
- 3) To develop industry standards, guidelines, and recommendations which further affect on-site waste water recycling, such as septic tank installation requirements and recommendations for contractors, septic tank operations and maintenance manuals for homeowners (with such items as simple “do’s and don’ts”), and further related items.
- 4) To act on behalf of the Precast Concrete Septic Tank Group by appearance before or representation within Committees, Boards or other activities which relate to the importance of the concrete septic tank to the onsite wastewater treatment industry.

PCANY SEPTIC TANK GROUP PRODUCING MEMBERS

Binghamton Precast & Supply, Binghamton, NY 607-722-0334
Burnett Concrete Products, Inc., Wolcott, NY 315-594-2242
Butts Concrete Products, Masonville, NY 607-265-2887
Concrete Building Supply, Plattsburgh, NY 518-563-0700
R. Deso, Inc., Champlain, NY 518-298-8411
Eastern Precast Co., Inc., Brookfield, CT 203-775-0230
The Fort Miller Co., Inc., Schuylerville, NY 518-695-5000
Grimm Building Materials Co., Troy, NY 518-272-1100
Guardian Concrete Products, Schenectady, NY 518-372-0080
Jefferson Concrete Corp., Watertown, NY 315-788-4171
Keeler Vault Co., Inc., Hudson, NY 518-851-6281
Kistner Concrete Products, East Pembroke, NY 585-762-8216
Lakelands Concrete Products Inc., Lima, NY 585-624-1990
Oneonta Block, Oneonta, NY 607-432-6641
Sunnycrest Inc., Auburn, NY 315-252-7214
Woodard’s Concrete Products, Inc., Bullville, NY 845-361-3471
Zeiser Wilbert Vault, Elmira, NY 607-733-0568

The PCANY website, www.pcanyc.org identifies the plants that have qualified under our Certification Program, and lists the specific tanks allowed to cast in the “PCANY LISTED” red tag, which means they have been properly designed and manufactured and vacuum tested for water tightness.