

# *Lint...*

## The Covert Catastrophe



**Y**our clothing, through its lifetime, will continuously shed lint and other particles it might collect like dust and pet fur. Similar to skin cells, a great deal of lint particles exfoliate from your clothes, especially when in the washer or dryer. We realize that lint comes off in the dryer because we see it in the filter. But fewer of us might think about the lint that gets discharged from the washing machine. That lint goes directly into a septic system and can cause it to fail!

Synthetic fibers, such as polyester or nylon, and even certain natural fibers like cotton, get discharged with wastewater from your washing machine and flow into your septic tank. The best case scenario is these indigestible fibers settle down to the bottom of the tank, which reduces the capacity of your septic system over time and eventually prompts a professional cleaning to avoid backups. Extra pump-outs will save your system but they are costly.

A worse consequence is these fibers get transferred into the leaching field where they plug up the pores of both the pipes and surrounding soil. A healthy leaching field for a septic system means maintaining the porous, filtering nature of the soil so it consistently breaks down and purifies all waste, thereby preventing harmful and repugnant substances in greywater from infiltrating groundwater sources below the gravel bed, as well as nearby bodies of water such as streams and lakes.

When these synthetic lint particles block up your pipes and tangle your soil there is no practical way to unclog the system. A new system is your only recourse. You can't manually remove lint or start cleaning the tank and pipes yourself; it's dangerous to enter an unventilated space and the gases from your septic systems can be fatal. Your only solution will be several thousands of dollars in cost for cleanup and even more cost for repairing or replacing parts of a septic system. No home improvement project costs as much as septic system cleanup, removal, and replacement.

When it comes to preserving septic systems, regular maintenance by licensed professionals and responsible water usage are fairly common sense solutions. A crucial measure often overlooked for preventing nasty clogs, ruined property, and polluting nearby water bodies or wells is making sure fine and synthetic solids don't get into the septic tank in the first place.

A healthy septic system relies on microbes to absorb and consume its nutrients. Microbes cannot consume lint. Inorganic materials like lint are not biodegradable and get into septic systems because we flush them. Most people know better than to send plastics, pills, disposable diapers, feminine hygiene items, and cleaning or other chemicals into the system, but lint from your clothes washer can be easy to overlook.

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## How To Prevent This Lint Crisis

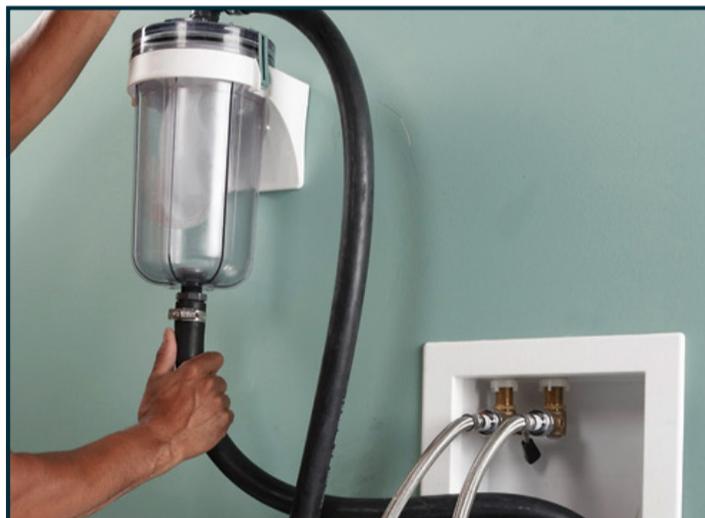
There are two solutions for capturing washing machine lint and protecting your septic system: do all your laundry at the laundromat; or install a fine mesh filter on the discharge hose from your washer. If the local laundromat isn't appealing, a proper fine mesh filter will capture at least 90% of the lint in the washer discharge.

### Lint filters



Lint filters are relatively inexpensive. You can buy cheap aluminum or poly-fabric ones that come in packs, resemble socks when rolled out, and have to be changed every few months depending on your volume and frequency of laundry you do. They come with cable ties so it's quick to install one by tying it onto a washer discharge hose. A pack of disposable filters typically costs around \$10-\$20 normally. Criticism for these economical filters is the mesh often isn't fine enough and smaller particles will still get through the filter.

### Drain Bowl



A better investment option would be to purchase a high-quality, ultra-fine reusable lint filter which comes with a drain bowl and mounting kit and is installed on a wall near the washer. The filter is easy to open and rise clean of accumulated lint. The whole package typically costs around \$120-\$150, but will last for many years. It is a small price to pay when you think of the alternatives.

# Plan For The Future

Septic systems are a crucial component of any residential and commercial building not connected to municipal water and sewer lines.

When septic systems fail, the consequences for residents are usually disastrous.

Unfortunately, we typically invest our time and capital in more outwardly visible home improvement projects, like new roofs, our windows and walls, and HVAC systems.

Septic systems can be taken for granted due to their subterranean nature, yet we rely on them every day when we flush the toilet, wash dishes, do laundry, or perform other tasks that require and discharge water.



## Septic Preservation

is your go-to expert supplier of systems and services for solving septic problems, maintaining septic health, and installing new systems that are properly matched with household, multi-unit residences, or commercial property needs.