

Developing Effective Programs Through Targeted Communication

*A Look Into Jamestown's Education and
Outreach Program*



Justin Jobin
Wastewater
Management Consultant

Education and Outreach Program

- Keep Residents Informed
- Public will Support Town if they understand:

What, Why, and How

- Advertisings
- Workshops
- Public displays
- Notices & Factsheets
- Website





SAMPLE ADVERTISEMENTS



Attention Jamestown Homeowners!

In February the Town of Jamestown will implement mandatory septic system inspections. The Town is asking for volunteers to get their system inspected before mandated to do so.

If you would like to avoid the rush and get your system inspected by 2003 you must register with the town by November 1st. To register contact Justin Jobin at 423-7220 or fax the form below to 423-7229





Attention Jamestown Septic System Owners

In February residents will begin receiving notices from the Town of Jamestown informing them that they have to have their septic system inspected. The first maintenance inspection program will be phased over a 3-year period; approximately 150 homeowner notices will be sent every 2 months. It will be the homeowner's responsibility to arrange and pay for the inspections.

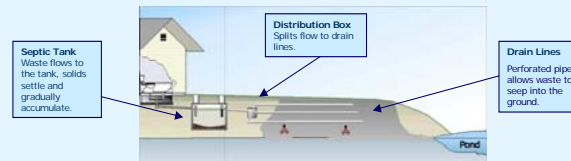
The town will be holding an informational session on February 26th at 7pm in the meeting room of the Library to answer any questions residents may have regarding the mandatory septic system inspection process.

If you would like more information or are unable to attend the meeting you may contact Justin Jobin at 423-7225 Wednesdays and Thursdays between 8am and 4:30pm, or visit us on the web at:

<http://www.jamestownri.net/pw/wwm/management.htm>

Public Displays

Typical Septic System Profile



Town Inspection Procedures

1. Interview Homeowner

- Determine system type, age, and use

2. Locate System

- Locate system, expose and open lids



3. Inspect the Site

- Odors, wetness, burnt grass or lush growth
- Shrubs or trees within 10
- Cars, boats or other objects crushing system
- Storm water flowing over the system
- Cave-ins or exposed system components.

4. Inspect the Septic Tank

- Check level of effluent (should be at outlet invert)
- Recommend pumping as needed
- Check condition of risers, baffles, and tank

IF PUMPOUT IS PERFORMED:

- Inspect empty tank for structural damage
- Listen for water draining back from leach field
- Look and listen for obvious leaks

COMPLETE INSPECTION REPORT

- Describe system
- Identify repairs needed
- Recommend next service date
- Submit report to Town, copy to homeowner



Measure scum & sludge layers. Pumping needed if combined layers are >50% of tank volume.

HOW THE JAMESTOWN INSPECTION PROGRAM WORKS

1. In February of 2003 the town began mandatory ISDS inspections. 1,725 systems will be inspected over a 2 ½ year period.
2. The first year of the program will focus on the Jamestown Shores area. Approximately 150 Notices will be sent out every 2 months (March – November). Homeowners do not need to wait for a notice from the town to get their system inspected.
3. Upon receiving a notice, you have forty-five days to schedule an inspection with a Town Approved Inspector.
4. To prepare for the inspection, collect any information about the system and past maintenance, and if possible locate and uncover the system yourself to lower costs.
5. Pump-outs are recommended but not required as part of the inspection process.
6. The inspector will follow procedures set forth in the RI DEM inspection Handbook
7. The Inspector will complete a report that describes the system, identifies maintenance requirements, and recommends a schedule for the next inspection and pump-out.
8. The inspector will submit the inspection report to the town via the internet. The town will review the inspection results, and send you a reminder before your next inspection and pump out is due.

STEPS TO PREVENT SEPTIC SYSTEM FAILURE

- ✓ Inspect regularly
- ✓ Pump-out as needed
- ✓ Conserve water
- ✓ Only flush wastewater and toilet paper down the drain
- ✓ Don't use drains as garbage disposal
- ✓ Retrofit septic tank with access risers and effluent filter
- ✓ Repair or upgrade failing systems as soon as possible
- ✓ Plan to replace steel tanks and cesspools

Public Displays



RECOMMENDED SEPTIC TANK RETROFITS

ACCESS RISERS

Access risers are installed on the septic tank to easily locate the tank and to provide access to the tank for inspection and maintenance.



PVC Risers are physically bolted to the tank, and provide a water-tight seal.



Risers can be cut to grade and the green fiberglass lids easily blend in with the lawn.

EFFLUENT FILTERS

An effluent filter is an inexpensive plastic screening device that fits in the outlet end of the septic tank. The filter helps prevent solids from leaving the tank and clogging drainfield.



Access risers make it easy to maintain your effluent filter.

To Clean:
Simply remove the filter and hose it off over the inlet end of the tank. This can be done by the homeowner or service provider.



Frequently Asked Questions

About Septic System Inspections

What is the Purpose of the town Inspection Program?

1. To create a town wide ISDS inventory
2. Establish an individual maintenance program for homeowners.
3. Identify and Replace failed systems.

Who Can Perform Inspections in Jamestown?

Only Inspectors approved by the Town of Jamestown can perform inspections on your system. A list of approved inspectors is available from the town.

Why are Inspections Important?

Like changing the oil in your car, regular inspections and maintenance keeps your system working and prevents costly repairs.

Do I have to get my septic tank pumped when I have an Inspection?

It is recommended to have your septic tank pumped when you are having it inspected. The inspector should examine the system before and after pumping. Once the tank is pumped out it allows the inspector to examine the physical structure of the tank.

How Much Does an Inspection Cost?

Typical costs for inspections range from \$50 to \$150.
The cost of pump-outs range from \$140 - \$175

Why Happens My System Fails Inspection?

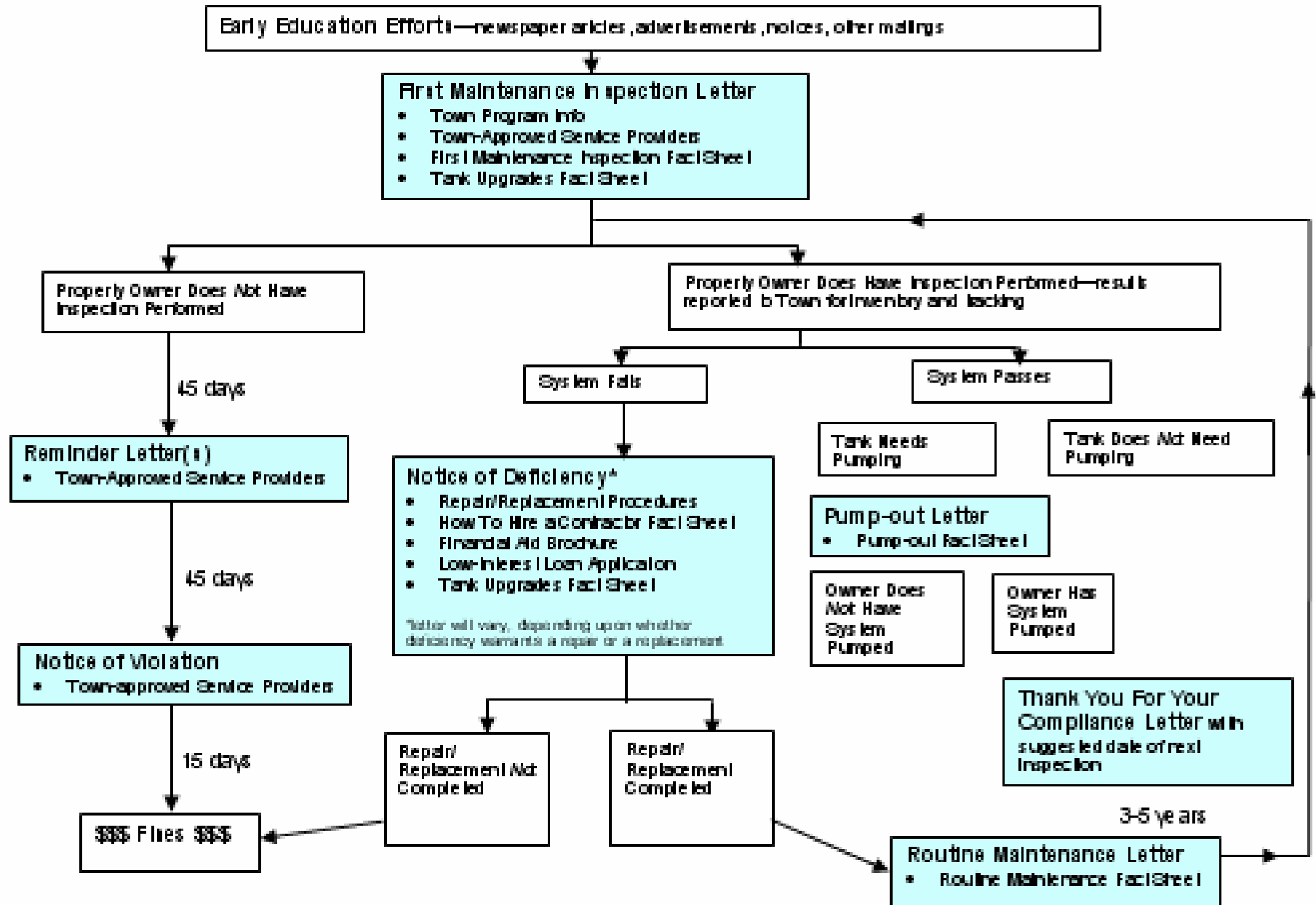
A failed system is an immediate threat to public health and the environment. You are required to start the process to replace the system within 30 days. Technical assistance is available from the town.




Notices & Factsheets

Sample Sequence of Town Mailings to Property Owners Regarding Wastewater Management Program

This flowchart provides a suggested sequence of Town mailings to property owners, as part of a wastewater management program. The shaded boxes indicate letters, with bulleted items being suggested enclosures.





Jamestown Town Offices
44 Southwest Ave
Jamestown, RI 02835
Office: 401-423-7225
Fax: 401-423-7229

Justin Jobin
Onsite Wastewater Specialist
JJobin@JamestownRI.net

The Town of Jamestown Office of Wastewater Management

February 1, 2003

Dear Homeowner,

As you may be aware Jamestown's Onsite Wastewater Management Ordinance requires initial inspections of every homeowner's septic system. The time has come for you to have a First Maintenance Inspection performed on your septic system. It will be the responsibility of the homeowner to pay for and to schedule a First Maintenance Inspection. Homeowners must contact one of the town-approved inspectors, found on the enclosed sheet, to perform the inspection. **Homeowners, have 45 days from the date of this notice to have this inspection performed. The ISDS Inspector MUST enter the inspection report into the Town's database by March 17th 2003.**

The Inspector will perform the following tasks to your individual sewage disposal system (ISDS):

- Measure the solid accumulation in the septic tank
- Examine the structural condition of the system
- Determine the size and type of septic tank
- Determine the age of the system
- Assess the overall function of the system
- Recommend pumping if needed
- Identify a routine maintenance schedule

Enclosed you will find a list of Jamestown approved ISDS inspectors. It is recommended that homeowners get quotes from more than one inspector. Homeowners should check with the inspector and pumper to make sure they record all inspection and maintenance activities into the town's database. Some inspectors will offer a discount if you pump and inspect at the same time. Pump-outs are recommended but not required as part of the First Maintenance Inspection.

Watertight access risers and effluent filters are recommended on existing septic tanks and are required on all newly constructed ISDS. The effluent filter can protect your drainfield from clogging with solids, and the access risers will provide greater ease in accessing your tank at the time of the next inspection or pump out.

If you have any questions regarding the inspection process please feel free to contact my office. Noncompliance with the wastewater management ordinance may result in monetary penalties to the property owner.

Sincerely,

Justin Jobin
Onsite Wastewater Specialist
<http://www.jamestownri.net/pw/wwm/management.htm>

Sample Inspection Notice

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING A

SEPTIC SYSTEM FIRST MAINTENANCE INSPECTION

Managing your septic system

Regular maintenance of your septic system will keep your system working efficiently and can prevent costly repairs. Inspections also can save you money by preventing unnecessary pump-outs, and a well-maintained system helps protect water quality.

The first maintenance inspection provides baseline information about your system. You are encouraged to observe the inspection, using the checklist of standard RI DEM procedures below, so that you can have confidence in the results. If you believe the inspection was not completed properly, please contact your local wastewater management authority.

WHAT WILL THE INSPECTOR DO?

1. Determine Property Information

The inspector needs a copy of the permit or design plan, which you can provide, if you have one. The inspector also will ask about everyday water use practices in order to better understand how well your system is functioning.

- Determine the age of the system.
- Determine the type of system.
- Determine household appliances present.



2. Evaluate the Site

- Check for impermeable surfaces, heavy objects, or large trees over the drainfield.
- Check for odors, ponding, or soggy areas.
- Check vegetation such as lush green grass or burnt-out grass.
- Check the landscape position for possible runoff.



3. Locate the System

- Locate and expose all access ports.
- Locate the approximate location of the drainfield.
- Sketch a diagram of components with measurements.



4. Evaluate the Tank

- Determine the size of the tank.
 - Check the effluent level in the tank. Effluent levels can indicate potential problems with leaks or drainfields.
 - Record solids accumulation.
 - Check the condition of baffles.
- Baffles are critical because they control the flow of suspended solids within the tank and help prevent their exit to the drainfield.
- Check the overall structure of the tank.



The tool shown is used to measure the depth of sludge and scum layers. If those layers comprise at least 35% of the tank's storage capacity your tank will need a pump-out.

5. Pump-Out

Pump-outs are highly recommended as part of a thorough first maintenance inspection. A pump-out performed during an inspection should include the following tasks. Check with your town hall for specific pump-out requirements.

- Check for drainback to the tank from the leachfield.
- Check the condition of the tank weep hole and midseam.
- Check the overall structure of the empty tank.



6. Check the Effluent Screen if Present

Effluent screens (also called outlet screens) are recommended as an inexpensive preventative measure.

- Check if the screen needs cleaning.
- Hose the screen off into the inlet side of the septic tank.
- Recommend a cleaning interval.



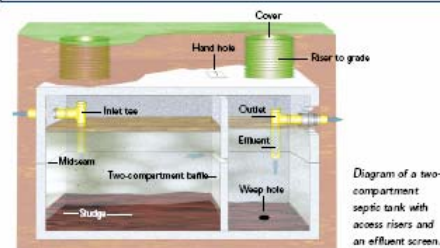
7. Provide Results and Recommendations

- Evaluate the overall system.
- Identify any needed repairs or upgrades.
- Complete recommendations and suggest a routine maintenance schedule.
- Submit required documentation to the homeowner and to the town.



Homeowners Tips for the Inspection

- Get multiple quotes from town-approved inspectors.
- Ask the inspector about discounts for inspecting and pumping at the same time.
- Ask the inspector about discounts if you locate and uncover the tank yourself.
- Prepare the information that the inspector will need (such as the system design plan and water bills) prior to his arrival.
- If possible, be home when the inspection occurs so that you can answer questions from the inspector and ask questions about the functioning of your system.
- Be sure that the inspector recommends a routine maintenance and pumping schedule. This will vary depending upon the type of system you have, the number of people in your household, and how much water you use.
- Be sure to get a copy of the inspection report from the inspector.



Additional Information Is Available

This series also includes fact sheets about routine maintenance, pump-outs, and recommended septic system upgrades such as effluent screens and access risers. Additional information is available at: www.uri.edu/ce/wq or call the URI Onsite Wastewater Training Center at 401-874-5950.

Septic System Checkup: The Rhode Island Handbook for Inspection. RI Department of Environmental Management. Available at www.state.ri.us/dem. Additional information is available at: www.uri.edu/ce/wq/cwrc/html/cwrc.html



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University of Rhode Island
College of the Environment and Life Sciences
Department of Hazardous Waste Sciences
Cooperative Extension Office Wastewater Training Center and Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials

Inspection Procedure Fact sheet

Recommended Upgrades for Your Septic Tank

ACCESS RISERS, EFFLUENT SCREENS, & TWO COMPARTMENT TANKS

Managing your septic system

Basic septic tank upgrades can simplify maintenance, improve system function, and protect your drainfield for long-term savings. Access risers and effluent screens are low-cost improvements for existing or new tanks. Two-compartment tanks are a cost-saving option, if you are installing a new tank.

ACCESS RISERS

Access risers are installed on the septic tank. They help owners and inspectors easily locate the tank, and they provide access for maintenance and repair. They also avoid the need to repeatedly dig up the lawn for routine inspections. In Rhode Island, risers are required on new tanks, and in some towns, they are required on older tanks as well. Check with your town hall for their guidelines.

PVC Risers Are Recommended

PVC risers are watertight, and they have lightweight, yet strong, fiberglass lids. The lids are safely secured using bolts and cannot be removed without proper equipment. As shown above right, the risers can be cut to grade and are less conspicuous in the landscape.

Concrete Risers

Concrete risers, such as the one shown in the lawn to the right, are sometimes cheaper than alternative risers, such as the PVC riser shown above. However, the heavy lids of concrete risers make access difficult. In addition, lids are not waterproof, causing problems if water leaks into the tank. Most homeowners also find concrete risers unsightly in the landscape, as they often cannot be cut to grade.



EFFLUENT SCREENS

An effluent screen is an inexpensive plastic filtering device that fits into the outlet end of the septic tank, as shown below left. The screen helps prevent solids from leaving the tank and clogging the drainfield, one of the most common causes of septic system failure.

If your screen is clogged, then it's working! Screens usually have to be cleaned more frequently than routine inspections occur, especially if you have a garbage disposal. You can hire someone to clean the screen, or you can clean it yourself. Simply remove the screen from the outlet end of the tank and hose it off over the inlet end. It is always wise to use rubber gloves and eye protection when cleaning the screen.



TWO-COMPARTMENT TANKS

If you are installing a new system or upgrading an existing one with a new tank, a two-compartment tank offers several advantages. The vertical wall positioned about two-thirds from the tank inlet helps trap solids more effectively and offers better protection of the drainfield. The larger size – generally 1500 gallons vs. 1000 gallons for a single compartment tank – means less frequent pump-outs.

Two-compartment septic tanks require only slightly more space than single compartment tanks, but they do cost a little more initially. For most homeowners, this cost difference is more than outweighed by long-term savings in pump-out and extra protection to the drainfield.

Some towns believe so strongly in the risk prevention offered by two-compartment tanks that they require all new systems to use them, so check with your local town hall.

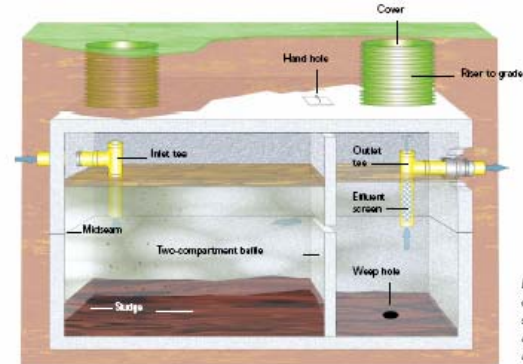


Diagram of a two-compartment septic tank with access risers and an effluent screen.

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University of Rhode Island
College of the Environment and Life Sciences
Department of Natural Resources Science
Cooperative Extension Office: Wastewater Training Center and Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials



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SAFEWATER



Special thanks to photographers: Ms. Doreen, Jim McElhinney and Cindy Howells Wilson



Financial Assistance
It's available to help you find, repair, or replace your septic system.

SAFEWATER



a community effort to protect, recycle and sustain our water resources

For Homeowners in Charlestown and South Kingstown

Community Septic System Loan Program

2% fixed rate loans, up to \$25,000 with a 10-year term. Owner-occupied and non-owner occupied homes of one to four units are eligible. No fees or points. Terms vary among towns.
RI Housing and Mortgage Finance Corp. 1-800-427-5560

Grants in Charlestown & South Kingstown

Up to \$150 to locate a septic tank for the first maintenance inspection and up to \$200 to install risers and/or effluent screens. Home-owner must submit itemized bill from the contractor and copy of cancelled check.
*Charlestown Wastewater Management Commission 364-5030
South Kingstown Public Works Department 789-9331*

For More Information

- ▶ Charlestown Wastewater Management Commission, 364-5030 or <http://charlestownri.org>
- ▶ South Kingstown Wastewater Management Coordinator, Public Works, 789-9331
- ▶ South County Community Action Wakefield, 789-3016

For Low and Moderate Income Homeowners

Rhode Island Housing & Mortgage Finance Corp. Home Equity Loans

Home equity loans, 5.25% interest rate. Owner-occupied, one to four family houses.
RI Housing and Mortgage Finance Corp. 1-800-427-5560

Home Equity Conversion Mortgage Loans for Senior Citizens

Seniors borrow against the equity in their homes, age 62, annual income below \$61,180. Owner-occupied, one to four family home or FHA approved condo. Variable interest rate.
RI Housing and Mortgage Finance Corp. 1-800-427-5560

USDA - Rural Development 504 Loans/Grants

Grants up to \$7,500 for very low-income seniors over age 62. Loans up to \$20,000, at 1% interest. A loan/grant combo possible.
USDA 60 Quaker Lane, Warwick 826-0842

a community effort to protect, recycle and sustain our water resources

Onsite Wastewater Management Office

*Wastewater Management
Ordinance*

Highlights of The Ordinance

News and Notes!

Jamestown Approved Inspectors

ISDS Inspection Form

SAFEWATER

*A Community Effort to
Protect, Recycle, and Sustain
our Water Resources*

[INSPECTION RESULTS](#)

ISDS Inspections: FAQ

ISDS Inspectors Application

*Recommendations for ISDS
Homeowners*

Onsite Wastewater Links

*Carmody Inc. Database
For Inspectors*

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