

# CANTERWOOD DIVISION 12 STEP ASSOCIATION

## Happy Summer!

Welcome to our latest summer newsletter! We thought now would be a good opportunity to share some basic information about the Division 12 STEP Association. For many, living here in Canterwood is the first time they have had a septic-type system. Even if you have experience with a septic tank, a STEP system is a bit more sophisticated.

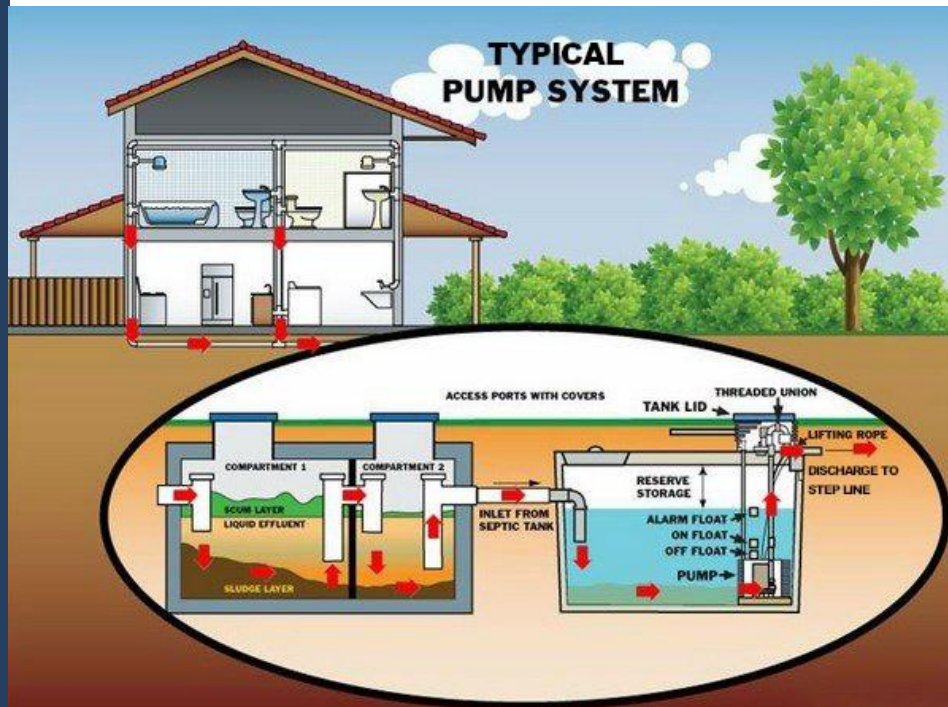
## Know at a Glance

While your STEP equipment may not be top of your mind—until there’s a problem—at a minimum, you should know where your STEP components are:

- Be sure to locate the lids in your yard. It’s essential to keep them uncovered, and replace any that are cracked. Rainwater infiltration can dramatically increase our pretreatment costs—and the charges assessed by Gig Harbor.
- Know where your STEP system shutoff valve and alarm box are. Typically, they are located in the vicinity of your STEP tank.
- Know what to do if your alarm goes off at 3 a.m. See page 4 for more details.

## What Is a STEP System?

STEP stands for Septic Tank Effluent Pump. STEP systems are an efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally sustainable way to handle sewer effluent. In general terms, our STEP system comprises the septic tanks and effluent pump in your yard, and the HOA-managed conveyance infrastructure (pipes, valves, etc.) and pump house that pre-treats the wastewater with chlorine before it’s discharged to the City of Gig Harbor for final treatment. Your monthly Division 12 STEP Association dues pay for the operation and maintenance of this infrastructure, wastewater pretreatment, and conveyance and final treatment by the City of Gig Harbor.



## Our STEP Website: Better Than Ever!

Steve Muretta, former Canterwood resident and previous Canterwood STEP president, continues to support our Association's website pro bono. Recently, Steve upgraded the website's software, so we could take advantage of new security enhancements as well as streamlining the FAQs. He also created an archiving system. Lynn Singleton, Division 12 STEP Association President, assisted Steve in cleaning up, transferring, and testing the site's content. We would like to extend our thanks to Steve and Lynn for all their hard work keeping our site working for the benefit of all Association members. For more information on your STEP system and our Association, please check out the website at [www.canterwooddiv12step.org](http://www.canterwooddiv12step.org).

## 2023 Board of Directors

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## What Is a STEP System (cont.)

As the wastewater flows into your first tank, solids settle and the remaining liquid flows into the second tank through a filter, as it is pumped to the main system. You should make it a point to have your tanks pumped every 3 to 5 years—depending on how many family members live in your home. Your filter may need to be cleaned more frequently. Annually is recommended.

## STEP Infrastructure: Pipes, Valves, and Other Bits!

Throughout 2021, 2022, and 2023, the Board of Directors made it a priority to locate, assess the condition of, and make improvements to the STEP system's overall infrastructure. Objectives were threefold:

1. Improve our treatment facility's operational capabilities and ensure compliance with Gig Harbor's pretreatment requirements.
2. Find the isolation valves and associated components within the Division 12 boundaries.
3. Locate the components outside of Division 12.

Thanks to the considerable efforts of Chad Scialabba and Lynn Singleton, we were able to accomplish the first two objectives by the end of 2022. Throughout the Autumn of 2022 and into 2023, Chad and Lynn also located and documented the majority of infrastructure outside Division 12.

There are still a few "missing" components, which we were simply unable to locate. We considered hiring a locating service. However, in working with Puget Sound Energy this Spring, we determined that the STEP infrastructure outside of Division 12 wasn't installed with the expected system tracing wire. This omission precludes the relatively easy process of tracing, requiring instead much more complicated and expensive efforts. Although, complete knowledge is always desirable, the Board decided to conclude our work there, as we have enough information to competently operate the system.

## Thank You!

We hope you found this summer newsletter helpful. If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments, please contact us—either through the website or using the email addresses provided in the lower left.

## Save \$\$\$ on Pumping and Repairs

Aadvanced Septic Services is once again offering discounted services to Canterwood residents as part of our Operation and Maintenance Agreement. Thank you, Aadvanced! For details, please see the Canterwood Division 12 STEP website at [www.canterwooddiv12step.org](http://www.canterwooddiv12step.org)



## Community Price List – July 2022 through June 2024

Alarm troubleshoot and repair	\$205.00
Camera with locator	\$350.00
Confined Space Entry - CSE (per entry)	\$275.00
Electronic locator pill	\$95.00
Install 72" or 24" riser with lid up to 2 feet	\$395.00
Install 6" riser with lid up to 2 feet	\$280.00
Jett and clear main line	\$325.00
Jett and clear main line (while pumping)	\$230.00
Machine dig and locate (2 hour min)	\$365.00
O & M inspection (if preformed while pumping)	\$115.00
O & M inspection by service crew	\$215.00
Pierce County fee (if applicable)	\$60.00
Pump replacement (pump models PF70-0511/PF20-0511)	\$2,050.00
Pump septic tank (up to 7000 gallons)	\$435.00
Pump septic tank (up to 7200 gallons)	\$495.00
Pump tank/pump chamber (up to 500 gallons)	\$335.00
Repair tank bottom (includes CSE, pumping additional)	\$2,060.00
Replace and install new riser lid	\$119.00
Replace/install baffle (without confined space entry)	\$305.00
Septic tank dig and locate (per 1/2 hour)	\$75.00
Truck time/standby time (after service call)	\$175.00
General service call (first 30 minutes)	\$215.00
All emergency calls (first 30 minutes)	\$399.00
Service tech additional hours*	\$90.00/hr/person
Excavation additional hours*	\$100.00/hr/person
Master electrician additional hours*	\$220.00/hr/person
Apprentice electrician additional hours*	\$120.00/hr/person
Drain cleaning additional hours*	\$110.00/hr/person

\*after first 30 minutes

**Call Aadvanced at 253-435-9999 when you need your STEP tank serviced.**

**When contacting Aadvanced to schedule services, please be sure to let them know that you are a member of the Canterwood Division 12 STEP Association, so you can receive the special discounted rates above.**

## How to Silence Your Septic Alarm

When there's an issue with your septic tank pump, the alarm will sound, and the red alarm indicator button on your control box will be lit up. (see figure below)

1. **Press the lighted red button.** This will temporarily silence the alarm.
2. **Flip the external switch to "Off."** (Usually that means flipping it from up to down.)

As long as you moderate water usage, you should be fine for a while (a few hours to a day).



## Next Steps

**Before** that next long shower, you need to resolve the issue with your tank pump:

- Has there been a power outage? Find out by visiting [www.penlight.org/penlight-outage-map-viewer/](http://www.penlight.org/penlight-outage-map-viewer/) or by calling Peninsula Light Co. at 877-853-1388.
- Has STEP been working in the area? Call a STEP Board member to find out. Contacts are provided at [www.canterwooddiv12step.org/](http://www.canterwooddiv12step.org/).
- You can also try troubleshooting the issue yourself.

## Troubleshooting Why Your Alarm Sounded

1. Flip the external switch to "On" (usually up).
2. Open your septic tank control box (see figure below) and reset the circuit breakers by flipping them to the "Off" position and then back to the "On" position.
3. Wait a minute to see if the alarm sounds again.
4. If the alarm sounds, silence it by pushing the lighted red button on the outside of the box.
5. Find the toggle switch labeled "Auto/Off/Man" or similar. (see figure below) Switch that to "Man" and listen for pumping sounds. This bypasses the tank float and lets you control the pump directly. **(Important: You cannot leave this toggle switch in the "Man" position, as the pump will never shut off. When you are done, it must be put back in the "Auto" or "Off" position.)**
6. Let the pump run for 15–20 minutes. Then switch the toggle to "Auto." Monitor the situation.
7. If the alarm sounds again, repeat steps 5 through 7 once.
8. If the alarm sounds again, switch the inside toggle to "Off", switch the external main switch to "Off," and call for service.
9. Try to moderate your water usage in the house until the system is serviced/repaired.

