

The Importance of Secondary Safety Devices



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3-year-old boy dies after falling into septic tank in Lakewood

A 3-year-old boy died after falling into a septic tank while playing in Lakewood Sunday afternoon. Pierce County deputies and firefighters responded to a call.

Sep 8, 2024



Child falls into septic tank at private school in Tamil Nadu, dies

In Villupuram, a 5-year-old kindergarten student from St Mary's Matriculation Higher Secondary School died after falling into a rusted,...

Jan 4, 2025



3-year-old dies after falling into septic tank in Lakewood

The boy walked into the neighbor's yard, lifted the lid of the septic tank and fell in, according to authorities.

Sep 9, 2024



Using a Secondary Barrier

Regulations and options for safety covers are increasing, and with good reason

By Sara Heger

August 2024

Onsite Insights



The way industry professionals maintain onsite wastewater treatment systems can directly impact the safety and lives of people living nearby. Ensuring that manhole lids are secure and that the system includes a secondary safety device can protect health and save lives.

As an industry, having access to components such as septic and pump tanks and ATUs is necessary and facilitated by large-diameter manhole access at grade. Some

Tank Access Opening Safety

- Industry initiative
- Objective to increase onsite wastewater system tank safety
- Require a barrier installed below the outer access port lid
- Reduce risk people inadvertently fall into an unsecured tank access port



Tank Access Opening Safety

- On a regular basis, people accidentally fall into onsite tanks
- A pumped tank often results in injury
- A tank containing sewage often results in a drowning death
- Children disproportionately affected
 - Unaware of danger
 - Height less than liquid level

3-year-old dies after falling into neighbor's septic tank in Washington state



[Saleen Martin](#)

USA TODAY

Published 2:49 p.m. ET Sept. 12, 2024 | Updated 2:50 p.m. ET Sept. 12, 2024



A 3-year-old Washington boy died Sunday after falling into his neighbor's septic tank, according to local authorities.

The incident happened in Lakewood, Washington, about 40 miles southwest of Seattle.

The 3-year-old was in the backyard playing with his 4-year-old brother and a 6-year-old neighbor on Sunday, said Sgt. Darren Moss Jr. from the sheriff's office in Pierce County.

Moss said in the statement that "an adult was in and out of the house with" the children.

Secondary Safety Device

- Deaths and injuries are preventable
- Frequent causes
 - Lid not replaced following O&M
 - Lid in place, not secured
 - Lid damaged, flips when stepped on
- Can work together to address the issue



Multiple Simple Designs Available



Regulatory Framework

- Industry collaborating to advocate for new requirements
- States with secondary safety device requirements: CT, IN, KY, MI, OK, TX
- First national-level requirement was CSA B66 tank standard
- Canadian provinces, excluding Quebec, shifted to secondary safety device

4.2.6.3 Risers

When risers above the tank access opening are provided, the manufacturer shall construct the tank in such a way that all joints between the tank access opening and the risers, as well as between all riser sections, are watertight.

All access openings (which are meant to be removed) over chambers with an opening greater than 200 mm in diameter, where there is a risk of accidental entry, shall have a secondary safety device that can withstand 91 kg of dead load.

Note: See Clause [4.1.3](#) for requirements for joints made on-site.

Industry “Ask”

- Prompt thought on this issue and rationale for action
- When rules are open, industry wants to work with agencies to develop reasonable requirements for tank access openings
- Model language available



Guardian
Safety Device

Child-Safe Design
This secondary safety solution includes a spring-loaded latch that automatically engages every time the lid is closed, taking over 50 pounds of force to overcome to access.

Easy Access
The lid design allows waste haulers to immediately access the tank below with increased space to navigate their hose.

- Childproof Latch
- Rated to support 300 pounds
- Universal Solution

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Final Thought

- Most common barrier to rule development: “it costs too much”
 - Multiple low-cost secondary devices on the market
 - Secondary device can be installed economically
 - On a percentage basis, small proportion of a home construction cost
- True measure of cost is to ask what is the cost of a life for a potential tragedy that is fully preventable



- Please reach out for more information
- Industry interested in collaborating with regulatory community

Thank You



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