



## ***Certifications, Warranties, and Manufacturing***

### **1. What does it mean for a septic tank to be IAPMO certified?**

To be IAPMO (International Association of Plumbing & Mechanical Officials) certified means a septic tank is among the best of the best. This means the product has been selectively and intentionally engineered, inspected, and rigorously tested to the highest industry standards. To receive certification, the septic tank and manufacturer must undergo various inspections and testing that will evaluate the raw materials used, manufacturing method and facility, the tank's physical properties, characteristics, and the ability to withstand various strains and hard-working conditions.

### **2. Does VPC have a manufacturer's warranty on their septic tanks?**

Yes, Valencia offers a three (3) year manufacturer's warranty on our septic tanks that covers workmanship defects. Should a defect appear within the warranty period, Valencia Pipe Company will supply a like replacement tank. Cost of removal and/or installation and consequential damages are not covered. Contact Valencia Pipe Company prior to removal of the alleged defective tank to receive the required warranty form.

### **3. How can I tell if my septic tank is still under warranty?**

You will have to refer to the serial number assigned to the tank and is included on the weather-resistant label near the top of the fill-opening of the tank. Then call Valencia Pipe Company at (661) 257-3923 x1026 to ascertain the date that the tank was manufactured.

### **4. Where are VPC septic tanks made? Are VPC septic tanks made in the USA?**

Our septic tanks are made in the USA at various manufacturing facilities located throughout the country. Our headquarters is located in Valencia, CA and our main manufacturing plant is located in Miami, OK.

### **5. What material is it made of?**

UV stabilized BPA free HDPE (high density polyethylene) resin.

## ***Product Range and Purchasing***

### **1. What septic tanks does VPC have for sale?**

Valencia Pipe Company offers five (5) septic tank product options: single compartment 500 gallon, 1000 gallon, and 1500 gallon septic tanks, and two compartment 1000 gallon and 1500 gallon septic tanks. Only 1000 gallon and 1500 gallon septic tank models are IAPMO certified.

### **2. Where can I buy VPC septic tanks?**

Our septic tanks are available for sale at The Home Depot®, or you can purchase them directly from various plumbing wholesalers in your market area. Valencia Pipe Company does not facilitate direct-to-consumer sales.

### **4. How are VPC septic tanks shipped?**

Valencia Pipe Company's septic tanks are available for direct shipment to a consumer's home or job site or can be will-called at your local Home Depot store. Each is placed on a forklift-ready pallet to streamline shipment, make forklift handling easier, and reduce the potential for damage to occur during transit.

## ***Installation and Usage***

### **1. What is the maximum and minimum burial level of your septic tanks?**

Valencia Pipe Company's septic tanks have a maximum burial depth of 30" (2.5 feet or 0.76 meters) and a minimum burial depth of 6" (0.5 feet or 0.15 meters).

### **2. What can I use between the septic tank and the surface grade?**

Use a manhole extension to bring septic tank access up to surface grade. There are several choices available at your local Home Depot or at your local Plumbing Wholesaler. Manhole extensions are 20" in diameter to fit over the septic tank manhole and can be stacked to attain a maximum 30" burial. The lid from the septic tank will fit on top of the manhole extension and then be easily accessible at the surface.

### **3. Do your septic tanks include 4" tees and gaskets?**

Yes, each VPC septic tank (except the 500 gallon model) includes the two 4" sanitary tee(s) for baffle installation and accompanying gasket(s) for a watertight seal.

### **5. Must a septic tank be vented?**

Yes, septic tanks have to be vented. However, the septic tank itself does not normally have a vent and is not the location where the system vent is typically installed. Instead, the vent for a septic tank is often incorporated into the drain, waste, vent (DWV) system necessary for the drains and fixtures within the building. This vent often expels through the building's roof.

### **6. Can I use VPC's septic tanks above ground?**

No, underground septic tank products are not designed for above ground use. Our septic tanks are engineered, tested, and approved for underground installation and use only. Failure to follow proper installation and usage guidelines will void the tank warranty.

### **7. Can I use this in my state?**

You should always check your local codes prior to purchase. Some jurisdictions prohibit in-ground plastic tanks. Other locations forbid septic tanks no matter the material. Some locations may have very specific requirements for the septic tank's design, while other states have septic tanks approved during the system design and permitting process.

Septic tanks cannot be returned to the retailer or distributor after installation as they are considered by regulations to be a "biohazard" even if it may not have been filled or used. This highlights why it is important to verify approval prior to purchase.

Valencia Pipe Company has done a state-by-state outreach and approval process with all 50 states within the U.S., which has sometimes extended to the county level, in addition to being IAPMO certified. While we cannot guarantee our septic tanks will be approved for your precise location, (as most manufacturers can't), there is a very good chance they can be used in your state.

### **8. Can these septic tanks be used to store water?**

No, underground septic tanks cannot be used to store potable (drinking) water. The material the tanks are made from is not rated, approved, or safe for freshwater applications. For approved safe underground water storage, we suggest you consider our white cistern tanks.

### **9. Can Valencia Pipe Company's septic tank be pumped?**

The septic tanks can and should be pumped (as in regular maintenance) as long as instructions are properly followed. As septic tanks are not made to remain empty at any time, refill the tank completely as quickly as possible after pumping.

### **10. Can this be used as a holding tank?**

No. Septic tanks must be kept full at all times (except when occasionally pumped for maintenance purposes). A holding tank is a temporary storage container, indicating the contents will be removed from the tank. For holding tank type uses, we recommend our cistern tank which has a stronger infrastructure that can handle repetitive pumping and pressure differentials.

### **11. Where is the best place to install a septic tank?**

The best place to install a septic tank is extremely site-specific and will also depend on local regulations. Generally, the best install site for a septic tank and system will be away from water features such as lakes, creeks, etc., either onsite or nearby, away from water wells, neighboring properties or property lines, underground utilities, and large trees. The distances here are generally regulated and are often referred to as setback distances. When considering water runoff, such as from rainfall, septic tanks should not be placed in low areas where water accumulates. Do not install in an area where traffic from vehicles or machinery is expected.

### **12. How do I install a septic tank?**

Complete and proper septic tank installation will depend on certain site specifics. However, installing a septic tank does follow a consistent procedure. Refer to our Best Practices for Septic Tank Installation for our recommended steps on how to install a septic tank.

### **13. Can I install a septic tank myself or is a contractor required?**

Whether you can install a septic tank yourself or if a contractor will be required depends on the regulations in your state. DIY septic tank installation is allowed in some U.S. states while others require a state-licensed contractor and additional professionals to be involved. If self-installation is allowed, understand there will be a step-by-step process likely involving permits, fees, inspections, and approvals.

### **14. How do I perform a watertightness test on a septic tank to meet my state's requirements for installation?**

A septic tank watertightness test may be required as a near-final step during the installation process. Guidelines on how to perform this test may be specified by the state's Administrative Code. In general, a septic tank watertightness test often includes: 1) plugging inlet and outlet pipes, 2) filling the septic tank with water up to the manway or into the manhole extension if used, 3) wait 24 hours, 4) refill with water if necessary, 5) wait 1 hour, 6) then observe for any wetness or flowing water around the tank.

### **15. Can a plastic septic tank be repaired?**

In some instances, yes, a plastic septic tank can be repaired if it should, for example, fail a watertightness test after installation and prior to backfill. Repairing a plastic septic tank should always, and only, be done by a certified professional.

## *Accessories and Additional Components*

### **1. What other products or accessories are available?**

Valencia Pipe Company offers various other products and accessories for use with septic tanks as well as water tank product lines for use in drinking water and rainwater harvesting applications.

Available septic tank accessories include: 4" baffle sanitary tee, 4" effluent filter, 4" outlet tee solids deflector, Sch 40 to SDR 35 bushing, manhole extension, riser, riser safety pan, domed lid with gasket, and butyl sealant rope.

### **2. What are septic tank risers?**

Septic tank risers are also known as manhole extensions, maintenance shafts, inspection risers, tank extensions, and access ports. A septic tank riser is used to bring the lid of the septic tank up to ground level.

### **3. Why are septic tank risers recommended?**

Septic tank risers are recommended for several reasons: 1) they eliminate the need to track down the location of an unknown septic tank, 2) they make the process of regular inspections and maintenance significantly easier, 3) risers remove the need to excavate during routine maintenance, saving time and costs, 4) they encourage maintenance by serving as a visual reminder and by making the process easier, 5) they keep the system safe as they can be securely locked to prevent access or accidents, 6) risers help prevent environmental damage by reducing the odds of system issues through regular maintenance, 7) they ensure a system is in compliance as they are mandated in several state jurisdictions, and 8) risers increase awareness of the septic tank to prevent an accident such as driving over it or building on top of it.

### **4. What is an effluent filter?**

A septic tank effluent filter is installed in the sanitary tee at the tank's outlet and is used as a barrier to prevent solids, particulate matter, and other debris from exiting the tank where it could clog the pipes or soil pores in the drain field.

### **5. Why is an effluent filter needed?**

An effluent filter is often required by a state, county, or local health department to comply with rules and regulations. Effluent filters are needed to prevent or reduce the chances of solid type materials from reaching the drain field where it could cause a problem that could result in system backup or failure, resulting in a costly repair. Septic tanks without an effluent filter are at greater risk of such problems occurring.

## *Maintenance and Care*

### **1. How often do I need to pump my septic tank?**

Most recommendations for septic tank pumping frequency are between 3 to 5 years. However, how often a septic tank needs pumped to remove solids buildup, as part of regular maintenance, will depend on personal factors such as the septic tank size, the number of compartments, the amount of people daily contributing to the system, and other considerations such as if there is a lapse in use, such as from a vacation property, or if a greywater system is in place. Changes in these factors can either increase or extend how often a septic tank needs to be pumped.

### **2. What is the life expectancy of a plastic septic tank?**

Professional research and reports indicate that a plastic septic tank should last 30 years and beyond when they are properly installed and maintained.

### **3. When does a septic tank need to be replaced?**

A septic tank may need to be replaced when a property begins to experience problems with its septic system. There are various signs of a problematic system and the solution could be a few different things. In general, a septic tank will need to be replaced if it has suffered physical damage such as a rupture or spilt that has caused a substantial leak. The only way to be 100% certain this is the case is to have the tank excavated and inspected by a professional.

## ***Environmental and Safety Considerations***

### **1. Are septic tanks dangerous?**

Septic tanks are only dangerous if opened or if there is a substantial system failure. It is not the tank itself that poses a safety hazard, but rather the gases and microorganisms present. Various microorganisms are found in sewage and exposure to them can cause illness. The inside of the tank is an anaerobic environment, meaning no or limited oxygen, sewer gases such as methane are also present. Exposure to this, such as from putting one's head down into an active septic tank, can make you lightheaded and even faint. Entering an active septic tank can be fatal and should, in no way, ever be considered or performed.

### **2. Are septic tanks bad for the environment?**

In short, no, septic tanks are not bad for the environment. The well-studied and understood natural and biological breakdown processes used to treat wastewater actually manages most, if not all, of the potential harm the systems could cause to the environment. Additionally, site-specific activities performed during the design and installation of septic tanks consider the local geology, nearby environmental concerns, and nearby water sources to limit or prevent the effect the system could have.

### **3. Can septic tanks freeze in cold weather or in winter?**

There is a slight concern for septic tanks to freeze in cold weather or in the winter. However, this concern is largely limited to the components connected to the septic tank, such as drainage pipes and leach field pipes, rather than the tank itself. The concern for freezing increases whenever a tank or plumbing has not been buried deep enough. Most often, a septic tank is buried beneath the frost line (or frost depth) and the natural processes occurring inside the tank create heat, both of which work to prevent freezing. Septic tank freezing is of most concern for shallow burials and systems that may not be used during winter, such as ones at vacation homes.

### **4. Why do septic tanks have to be watertight?**

As part of manufacturing and industry standards, septic tanks have to be watertight to ensure the system operates efficiently and effectively in collecting, treating, and disposing of wastewater and sewage. A leak in the tank or anywhere in the system will cause the premature release of wastewater and/or insufficient water levels resulting in improperly treated sewage and the potential for environmental concerns. In such events, the damaged or malfunctioning component should be replaced.

## ***Special Considerations***

### **1. Is it a problem that plastic septic tanks are lightweight?**

In most scenarios, no. The low weight of plastic septic tanks is not problematic. In most cases, the lightweight nature of a plastic septic tank is a benefit as it makes the tanks easier to transport, lift, handle, and move into position for installation.

### **2. Will a plastic septic tank float?**

No, a properly installed and correctly pumped plastic septic tank should not float. The idea of a plastic septic tank "floating" (coming up from underground in areas with high water tables) is a concern that should be

addressed upon installation. Plastic septic tanks are approved for use in most states across the U.S. by the state's governing regulations and the department that has jurisdiction.

In short, it is the idea that since plastic tanks are light, they will shift and “float” out of position when groundwater levels rise to near the surface, such as during heavy rainfalls. However, these details should be considered during site evaluations, system design, and installation. In the event that a high water table is a concern, buoyancy controls are available to secure the plastic septic tank and prevent any potential “floating”.

### **3. When does a septic tank need a ballast or other buoyancy controls?**

A septic tank needs buoyancy controls when the installation site features a high water table (or the potential for a high water table) that reaches to a specific height relative to the septic tank. This also often considers septic tank burial depth, underground soil characteristics, and local geology details. See our [Buoyancy Mitigation Chart](#) for recommendations on buoyancy controls and weights based on septic tank size, burial depth, and groundwater height.

### **4. What type of buoyancy controls are available for shallow groundwater installations?**

Valencia Pipe Company recommends the use of blocks and straps, a restraining collar, or helical anchors for buoyancy control. A common means is the blocks and straps method, also known as “Deadmen Anchors”, to counteract the potential concerns for a septic tank installed in shallow groundwater conditions. Deadman Anchors are heavy-duty concrete or steel anchors connected to each other by straps or cables that overlap the top of the tank. The anchors are buried parallel to the tank on each side and work to hold the tank down and provide buoyancy control.

### **5. Can I drive over or build on top of an underground septic tank?**

No, an underground septic tank should never be driven over or built on top of, regardless of if it's plastic, concrete, steel, or fiberglass. In the case of driving, septic tanks are often half a foot to three feet underground, and a vehicle contributes a lot of force down on the soil it drives over. This force can be transferred to the septic tank or its components, which are not made to handle the high physical strain. Shifting or fracturing can result and cause damage that will have to be repaired.

In the case of building over a septic tank, the same weight-force concern exists, but additionally, septic tanks have to be periodically inspected, maintained, and pumped. If it is built on, the ability for access and maintenance will be eliminated.

### **6. What type of plumbing should I use when installing a septic tank?**

Sanitary plumbing, such as what is used in a septic tank sewer system, is often regulated by a State Plumbing Code or the Uniform Plumbing Code. In general, a specific type of PVC pipe and fittings known as drain, waste, and vent (DWV) plumbing or SDR 35 plumbing is typically used. Valencia Pipe Company's septic tanks feature 4" PVC sanitary tees and are designed to connect to 4" PVC pipe. They can be connected to SDR 35 pipe by using the included bushing. A reliable, professional grade PVC primer and cement should be used to create a secure, leakproof connection between pipe parts.