



eljen Geotextile Sand Filter

# Eljen GSF System Owner's Manual

*How your septic system works  
and how to keep it working*



*Innovative Onsite Products and Solutions Since 1970*

## Contents

Introduction.....	2
Eljen GSF System .....	3
Eljen GSF System Description and How it Works .....	4
Eljen GSF System Operation .....	5
The Nature of Household Sewage.....	6
The Eljen GSF Septic System.....	6
The Septic Tank.....	7
Eljen GSF System Designs .....	8
Septic Tank Effluent Filters.....	9
Pumped Systems .....	9
System Care and Maintenance .....	10
Septic Tank Pumping.....	10
Effluent Sampling Procedure by Authorized Contractor .....	10
Potential System Problems.....	11
Preventing System Problems.....	12
Service and Maintenance Record and Requirements .....	14
Map of Your Septic System.....	14
System Details.....	15

## Introduction

No one budgets for a septic system failure. A new residential septic system can cost anywhere from \$10,000 to more than \$50,000, or higher, to install. If the system is not maintained, the soil around the system could become clogged, causing sewage to overflow onto the ground or back up into the house. The bottom line is that rebuilding a failed septic system is an expensive burden on the homeowner.

Preventing a septic system failure is easier and more affordable than it is to correct. By keeping harmful materials out of the system and by pumping out the septic tank at least every two years, or according to annual inspection observations, or local regulation, the homeowner can protect their system against premature failure. The relatively small cost of having the septic tank pumped is wise insurance to protect your home's wastewater system.

This Owner's Manual outlines the principles of septic system operations and explains the basic maintenance procedures that will lengthen the life of your system. If properly designed, installed, operated, and maintained, your Eljen wastewater system can provide many years of trouble-free service.

*This manual applies to the Eljen GSF System in Canada.*

## The Eljen GSF System



**eljen** Geotextile Sand Filter

**GSF A42 Module**



Perforated  
Distribution Pipe

GSF  
Module

Anti-Siltation  
Fabric

## ***GSF System Description***

The Eljen GSF (Geotextile Sand Filter) System is a cost-effective upgrade from other septic technologies. Unlike other systems that treat effluent only once, the GSF's patented Bio-Matt™ pre-treatment process treats septic effluent twice. That means the soil can absorb the effluent more readily, resulting in a better-performing system in a smaller area than other systems.

## ***Tested for Proven Performance***

The Eljen GSF System technology is based on research conducted by nationally recognized engineering scientists from the University of Connecticut. Eljen Corporation has more than 50 years of success in the onsite wastewater industry, with more than 100,000 systems currently in use. The GSF is recognized by regulatory officials and experts in the industry as one of the most reliable wastewater treatment technologies in the marketplace today.

The GSF technology is based on scientific principles which state that improved effluent quality provides increased soil absorption rates. GSF's proprietary two-stage Bio-Matt™ pre-filtration process improves effluent quality while increasing reliability and ease of operation.

## ***How the Eljen GSF System Works***

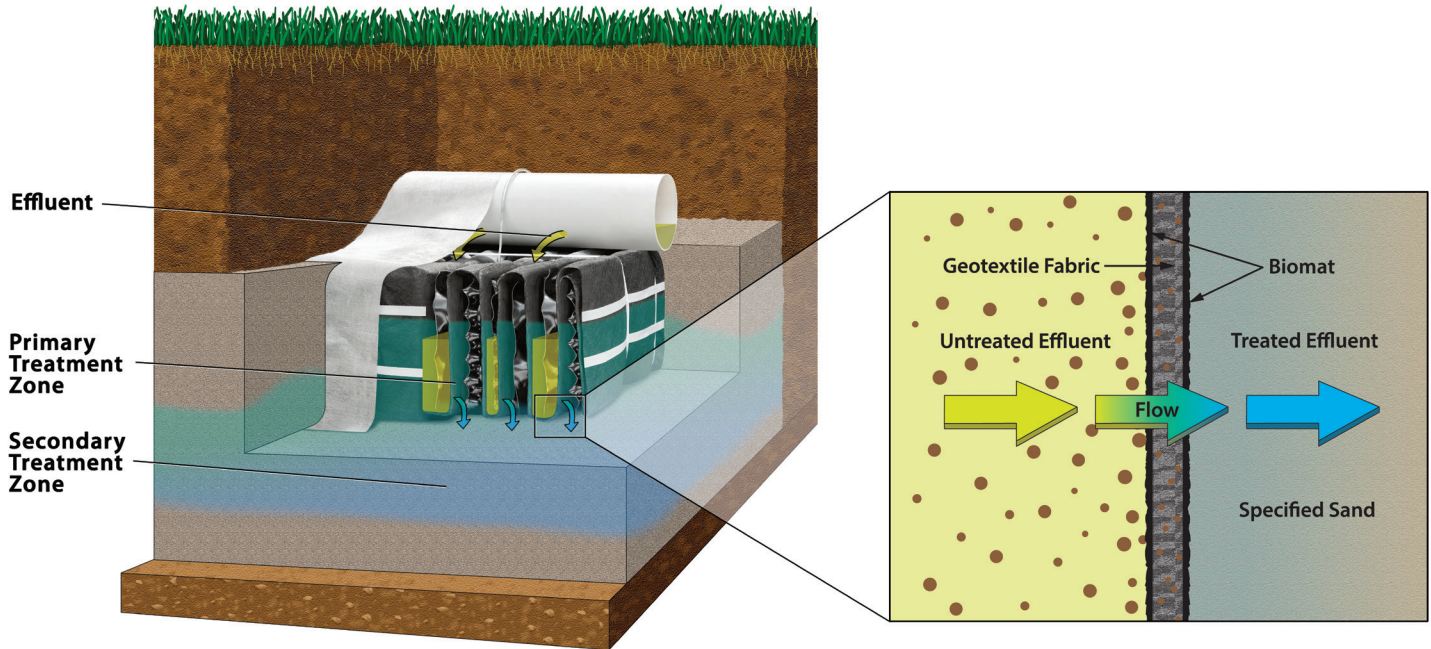
- Incoming effluent flows through the perforated pipes which distribute the effluent over the GSF Modules.
- Open air channels in the Modules allow beneficial bacteria to grow on the Bio-Matt™ fabric and treat effluent.
- An anti-siltation fabric covers the top and sides of the GSF Modules, protecting the system's sand and soil from fine particles that can clog the system. It also helps maintain effluent storage inside the Modules.
- After effluent passes through the GSF Modules, a lighter, secondary biomat forms on the layer of Specified Sand below the system, and on the sides of the GSF Modules, where the treatment process is continued.
- Treated effluent is then absorbed by the native soil where final filtration takes place.



**eljen** Geotextile Sand Filter

## ***Eljen GSF System Operation***

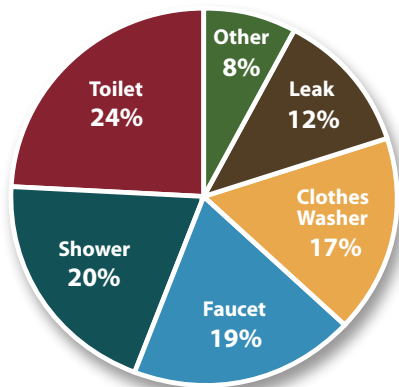
This schematic shows the inner workings of the GSF Module and the overall operation of an Eljen GSF System.



## The Nature of Household Sewage

Household sewage is a combination of wastewater from several sources including sinks, toilets, showers, washing machines, dishwashers, and garbage disposals. The largest source of household sewage may vary depending upon the number of residents and water-using appliances within the home. Organic matter comes mostly from toilets and garbage disposals, while sinks, showers, and washing machines contribute large amounts of wastewater containing only small amounts of soap and dirt (including grease, detergents, lint, and vegetable matter).

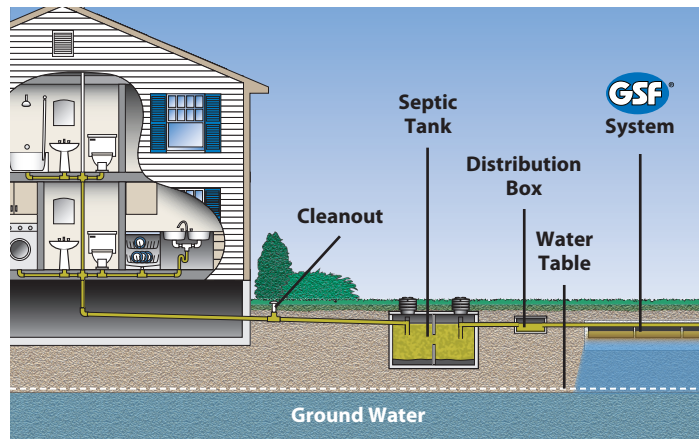
### Water Usage of the Typical Household



Source: Water Research Foundation, Residential End Uses of Water, version 2, 2016

## The Eljen Septic System

Your Eljen GSF septic system is a two-part sewage treatment and dispersal system buried in the ground. It is composed of a septic tank with an effluent filter, a treatment/dispersal system, and may have pumps, and other components depending on your location and system demands. The sewage generally flows by gravity: first, into the septic tank where larger particles settle out and some primary decomposition takes place, and then into the Eljen GSF System where it is further decomposed before slowly soaking/dispersing into the soil.

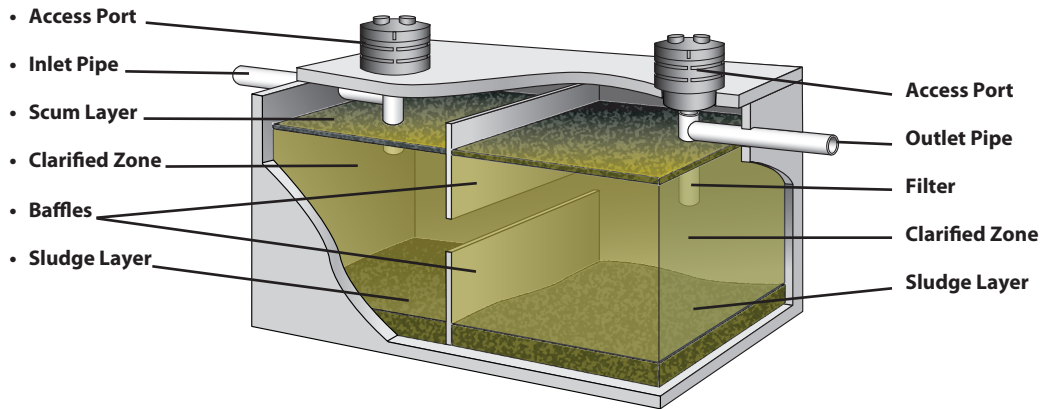


## The Septic Tank

Untreated household sewage would quickly clog any system if applied directly to the soil. The function of the septic tank is primarily a settling tank allowing solids to settle to the bottom of the tank while a somewhat cleaner liquid effluent is discharged to the Eljen GSF System for additional treatment. Septic tanks contain two compartments.

Within the septic tank, as shown below, four important processes take place.

- The heavier, solid particles in the sewage settle to the bottom of the tank forming a layer of sludge. Lighter materials, including fat and grease, float to the surface, forming a scum layer.
- Anaerobic bacteria living in the septic tank break down some of the organic solids into liquid components, helping to reduce the buildup of sludge in the tank.
- Sludge and scum are stored in the septic tank rather than being allowed to flow out of the septic tank, where they would quickly create problems.
- The septic tank effluent filter prevents scum and other floatable materials from flowing out to the wastewater system.



## ***Eljen GSF System Designs***

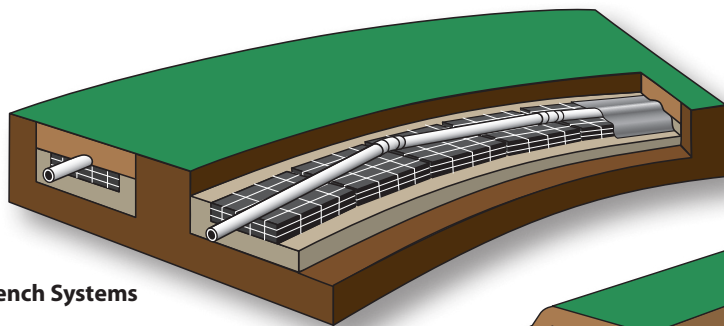
In a typical gravity-fed septic system, after primary treatment in the septic tank, the effluent flows to the distribution box or any types of efficient distribution device located just before the GSF system. In level systems, the distribution box divides the flow equally to the rows of GSF Modules.

All Eljen GSF Systems are installed on a layer of clean, medium to coarse Specified Sand. The effluent flows into the GSF Modules

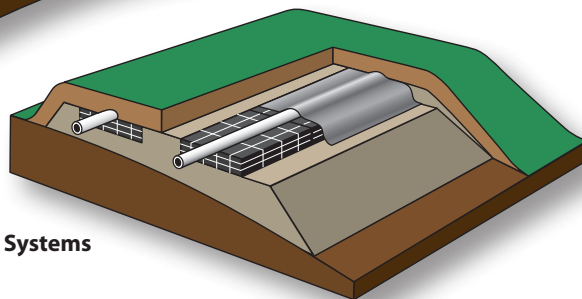
through perforated plastic pipes which are secured to the tops of the Modules. An anti-siltation fabric covers the GSF Modules and distribution pipe assembly. This fabric prevents backfill soil materials from entering the GSF Modules.

All Eljen GSF System designs are to be in accordance with the local Regulation, and permitted by your local approval authority.

**Trench Systems**



**Bed Systems**

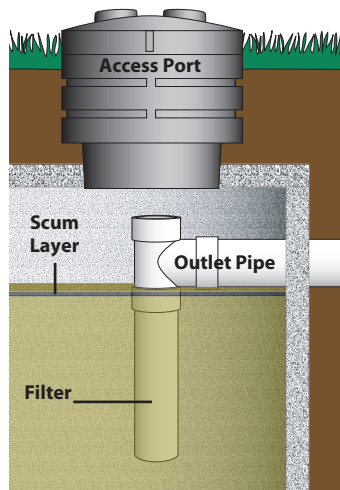


**Eljen GSF Systems offer flexible design options based on a site's needs and local regulations.**

## Septic Tank Effluent Filters

Your septic tank includes an effluent filter, which is located at the outlet of the septic tank. Effluent filters protect your GSF System from solids that may carry over from the septic tank during peak usage. By limiting the maximum size of particles entering the GSF Modules to about 1.6mm, they safeguard your system from unnecessary failure.

While effluent filters are partially self-cleaning, they must be thoroughly cleaned when the tank is inspected (we recommend once a year). When operating properly, they provide a fail-safe reminder that your tank needs pumping. Effluent filters may also be added to an existing system, either in the tank or externally. Filters must be installed before a pump chamber and should be easily accessible when the tank is serviced.



## Pumped Systems

Some site conditions require that the system is installed at a higher elevation than the septic tank, or the designer specifies that the Eljen GSF System is to be demand- or time-dosed, or installed as a pressure distribution system. When this is the case, an effluent pump and pump chamber are used. The pump chamber is typically located in a separate tank.

Effluent levels in the pump chamber are controlled by internal switches that turn the pump on and off, sending effluent to the system by dosing or pressure distribution.

## System Care and Maintenance

**SEPTIC TANK PUMPING**—Do not wait until your system shows signs of failure to have your septic tank pumped out. Waiting can mean complete clogging and an expensive repair bill. A septic tank effluent filter will gradually slow down effluent flow as a reminder that your tank should be serviced. Effluent filters in residential systems may need cleaning on an annual or more frequent basis. Call a professional service and maintenance provider to inspect your system. For a list of providers in your area, consult your local health or building department, phone directory, or the Internet.

**SCHEDULING**—Clean your effluent filter as needed. Pump out sewage from your septic tank according to annual sludge and scum measurements, local regulation, or every second year if none of the above situations apply. Regular pumping is the best insurance against system failure.

**SYSTEM INSPECTION**—If your system's access manholes are at ground level or are clearly marked or mapped, the job of pumping the tank should be fast and easy. While your tank is being inspected, ask the operator to examine the inlet and outlet baffles and/or septic tank effluent filter. If anything is broken, have repairs done immediately. The inlet should also be checked to see if wastewater is continuously flowing into the tank from previously undetected plumbing leaks.

**TANK SHOULD BE COMPLETELY CLEANED**—It is not necessary to leave any of the sludge in the tank as "seed." Incoming

sewage contains all the bacteria needed for proper operation. Acids or bleaches should not be used to clean the tank.

**NO ADDITIVES NEEDED**—The use of enzymes or other "miracle" septic system additives has not been shown to be of significant value, and some of these additives can actually harm your system.

**KEEP RECORDS**—Keep accurate records of your system's inspections and pumping in the space provided on page 14.

### **Effluent Sampling Procedure by Authorized Contractor** *(if applicable according to your local Regulation)*

- Open the sampling port.
- Lower the sampling tube mid-way into the effluent collecting receptacle at the bottom of the sampling port, not touching the sides of the sampling port, and keeping clear from the receptacle bottom.
- Retrieve sample using a clean suction device (vacuum pump or drill pump).
- Store sample at proper temperature.
- After collecting the sample, empty the sampling port receptacle, clean and rinse with tap water, and empty again.
- Close the sampling port.
- Expedite the sample to the lab respecting proper delays, temperature, and transport procedures.
- Submit the results to the customer and Building Official.

## Potential System Problems

### **SIGNS OF A FAILING SYSTEM:**

- Slow draining toilets or fixtures
- Sewage backing up into the house
- Sewage odours near the absorption bed or septic tank
- Sewage breakout onto the lawn

Problems with septic systems can be quite difficult to analyze. Whenever your system is not operating properly, it is best to contact a trained professional, such as the installer who constructed your system, a qualified service/maintenance provider, a licensed septic system pumper, or a knowledgeable designer/engineer. Your area Eljen distributor will be able to recommend trained personnel to assist you. Keep a copy of your design plans and septic system building permit on hand for use in analyzing any malfunctions. Always be sure to document any inspections or maintenance done to your system.

### **IF TOILETS OR FIXTURES ARE DRAINING SLOWLY:**

- Check your service records to see if it has been too long between tank servicing and pumping.
- If necessary, have your tank inspected and pumped.
- The pipe between the tank and the distribution box can also be checked for obstructions.
- If your system has a septic tank filter, have it cleaned. Remember, the effluent filter is there to protect your system.

### **IF SEWAGE IS BACKING UP INTO THE HOUSE AND YOU HAVE A PUMPED SYSTEM:**

- Have the pump and pump controls checked to make sure they are functioning properly.
- Make sure the pump dose is not excessive and/or is set according to the original design. The distribution box can be exposed to determine if effluent is properly/evenly flowing out of the pump chamber.
- Note that in winter, effluent can freeze in the force main or the distribution box and block sewage flow if the system is not used for a period of time.

### **IF YOU DETECT SEWAGE ODOURS OR SEE SEWAGE OVER OR NEAR THE SYSTEM, YOUR SYSTEM IS OVERLOADED:**

- This may be caused by excessive water use and/or ground water intrusion into the septic tank through a leaking tank seam. It is important that your septic system is installed at a depth assuring unsaturated conditions at all times.
- Check your water consumption for leaky toilets or fixtures.
- Have your tank pumped so that the system can be checked for ground water intrusion into the tank, especially at seasonal high water time.

**NOTE:** Sewage odours coming from vent pipes are common with all types of onsite wastewater systems. Call us for information about activated charcoal filters that can be attached to the vent pipes.

## ***Preventing System Problems***

### ***DOs***

- **DO** have your tank pumped when needed by a licensed septic tank service provider/pumper. Contact your local health department or building department, look in your phone directory, or on the Internet to find a qualified professional.
- **DO** practice water conservation. Promptly repair leaky faucets and toilets, run washing machines and dishwashers only when full, avoid long showers, and use water-saving features in faucets, showerheads, and toilets.
- **DO** divert roof drains and surface water from driveways and hillsides away from the septic system. Keep sump pumps and household foundation drains away from the septic system as well.
- **DO** take leftover hazardous household chemicals to your approved hazardous-waste collection center for disposal. Use environmental/septic-friendly cleaners and disinfectants sparingly and in accordance with product labels.
- **DO** learn the location of your Eljen GSF System treatment components and record them in the chart provided on page 14 of this manual.
- **DO** use the space provided on page 14 of this manual to keep a record of pumping, inspections, and other maintenance.
- **DO** keep a copy of your plan on file and attach a copy of your completed System Details form (see page 15) to a convenient place such as the main electrical panel.

## Preventing System Problems

### **DON'Ts**

- **DON'T** drive or park over any part of your septic system. The area over the system should be left undisturbed with only a mowed grass cover.
- **DON'T** plant trees or shrubs too close to your septic system. Roots from nearby trees or shrubs may clog or damage your septic system.
- **DON'T** put large amounts of cooking oil or grease into the system.
- **DON'T** put non-degradable materials such as disposable diapers, sanitary products, plastic, and cigarettes into the system.
- **DON'T** put poisons such as gasoline, oil, paint, paint thinner, pesticides, antifreeze, prescription medication, or other chemicals into the system.
- **DON'T** flush rags or wipes, which can clog your pipes, pump, and filter. A clogged pump can burn out, leading to expensive repairs.
- **DON'T** use commercial septic tank additives. These products usually do not help and some may hurt your system in the long run.
- **DON'T** wait for signs of system failure. Follow the maintenance advice in this manual.
- **DON'T** use garbage disposals unless your system has been designed according to the requirements of Eljen's Garbage Disposal, Design and Installation Guidelines.
- **DON'T** discharge water softener backwash waters to the septic system unless you have specifically obtained permission in writing from your Eljen GSF distributor.

## Service and Maintenance Requirements

Depending on your local Regulation, it may be required that the Owner enter into a Maintenance Agreement with Enviro-STEP Technologies or one of its authorized service providers to undertake service and maintenance of your new Eljen GSF System.

[illegible]

## Eljen GSF System Details

Owner's Name, Address, Phone:	System Address, if Different than Owner's Address:
Contractor's Name, Address, Phone:	Designer's Name, Address, Phone:
Contractor's License Number:	Designer's License Number:
Installation Date:	Number of House Occupants:
Number of Bedrooms:	Septic Tank Effluent Filter Model Number:
Design Flow in Liters / Day:	Number of Eljen GSF Modules Used:
Number of Rows:	Number of Eljen GSF Modules per Row:
System Design: <input type="checkbox"/> In-Ground <input type="checkbox"/> Raised <input type="checkbox"/> Pumped <input type="checkbox"/> Gravity <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	
System Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Repair / Replacement <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction <input type="checkbox"/> Upgrade	
Structure Type: <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	
System Use: <input type="checkbox"/> Year-Round <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal	

### Eljen Corporation Standard Limited Warranty for Septic Products

Each GSF Module manufactured by Eljen Corporation and installed and operated as an onsite treatment system in accordance with Eljen Corporation's local Design and Installation Manual is warranted to the owner against defective materials and workmanship for two years from the date the system is inspected and activated for operation. In order to exercise its warranty rights, the system owner must notify Eljen Corporation, or its distributor, Enviro-STEP Technologies, in writing at 90 Meadow Road, Windsor, Connecticut 06095 within 15 days of the alleged defect. Eljen Corporation will supply replacement Modules determined by Eljen Corporation to be defective and covered by this Limited Warranty. Eljen Corporation's liability specifically excludes the cost of removal and/or installation of the Modules; damage to the Modules due to ordinary wear and tear, alteration, accident, misuse, abuse, or neglect of the Modules; the placement and/or use of improper materials into the system containing the Modules; failure of the Modules or the septic system due to improper design, improper installation, excessive water usage, improper grease disposal, or improper operation; not using specified materials during system construction, specifically sand meeting the ASTM C33 specification; or any other event not caused by Eljen Corporation. System owners shall consider the Modules as single use, and re-use of Modules that were previously installed in an activated onsite system shall void this Limited Warranty. For this Limited Warranty to apply, the Modules must be installed in accordance with all site conditions required by state and local codes, all other applicable laws, and Eljen Corporation's installation instructions. This Limited Warranty and its remedies are exclusive and shall apply to no other party other than the system owner. In case of a change of ownership, the remainder of the Limited Warranty can be transferable to the new owner with the condition that the system is used for the same purpose and flow rate and wastewater characteristics remain the same. The total duration of the limited warranty cannot extend in any circumstances beyond 2 years from the date of installation.

**THERE IS NO IMPLIED WARRANTY OF MERCHANTABILITY AND THERE IS NO IMPLIED WARRANTY OF FITNESS FOR BUYER'S PARTICULAR PURPOSE; THE IMPLIED WARRANTY OF MERCHANTABILITY AND THE IMPLIED WARRANTY OF FITNESS FOR BUYER'S PARTICULAR PURPOSE ARE HEREBY DISCLAIMED. THERE ARE NO WARRANTIES THAT EXTEND BEYOND THE DESCRIPTION ON THE FACE HEREOF.**

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL ELJEN CORPORATION BE LIABLE TO THE SYSTEM OWNER OR ANY THIRD PARTY UNDER THIS AGREEMENT OR OTHERWISE FOR (a) ANY LOSS OR DAMAGE CAUSED BY OR ARISING OUT OF ANY DELAY IN FURNISHING ANY MATERIALS UNDER THIS AGREEMENT OR ANY ACT THAT IS NOT INTENTIONAL OR RECKLESS IN NATURE; OR (b) ANY INDIRECT, SPECIAL, EXEMPLARY, OR CONSEQUENTIAL DAMAGES, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER ELJEN CORPORATION HAS BEEN ADVISED OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGES. WITHOUT LIMITING THE FOREGOING, SYSTEM OWNER OR ANY THIRD PARTY'S SOLE AND EXCLUSIVE REMEDY IN RESPECT OF THIS AGREEMENT AND THE MATERIALS FURNISHED HEREUNDER SHALL BE LIMITED TO THE REFUND TO SYSTEM OWNER OR ANY THIRD PARTY OF THE APPLICABLE FEES ACTUALLY PAID TO ELJEN CORPORATION UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WITH RESPECT TO THE PARTICULAR MATERIALS AT ISSUE. IN NO EVENT SHALL ELJEN CORPORATION'S LIABILITY HEREUNDER EXCEED THE APPLICABLE FEES ACTUALLY PAID TO ELJEN CORPORATION UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WITH RESPECT TO THE MATERIALS AT ISSUE.

This is the Standard Limited Warranty offered by Eljen Corporation. Any purchaser or potential system owner of Modules should carefully read and understand this warranty prior to the purchase of the Eljen GSF Wastewater Treatment System.



*Innovative Onsite Products and Solutions Since 1970*

[www.eljen.com](http://www.eljen.com)

*Represented By:*



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