

Frequently asked sewage disposal Questions

How much does it cost for a permit?

District Health Department #2 provides numerous services that require permits and fees. For the current cost of any permit, please refer to the fee schedule.

How long does it take to process a permit?

District Health Department #2 policy states that site evaluations will be completed within eight (8) business days of receipt of the application and fee. However this time may vary depending on such things as a lack of required information, project complexity, involvement of other agencies, and weather conditions. Every effort will be taken to ensure that your permit application is completed in a timely manner.

What are your hours of operation?

Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 12:00 noon and 1:00 to 4:30pm. Closed Holidays

How do I obtain a “perk test”?

The term “perk test” is a general term for a soil/water table evaluation which is preformed during a vacant land or septic permit application evaluation. These evaluations are conducted to determine if an applicant’s property “perks,” or is acceptable for installation of a sewage disposal system. An individual must submit the proper application and fee to the health department which will then conduct the requested site visit and evaluation.

What is the difference between a vacant land evaluation and septic permit application evaluation?

Both evaluations are essentially conducted in the same manner. Physical site characteristics, soil conditions, and depth to seasonal high water table are all addressed in order to determine the suitability of the site for construction of a sewage disposal system. The primary difference is that a septic permit allows construction of a septic system, gives very specific construction requirements, and has an expiration date. Vacant land evaluations provide very general information regarding the suitability of a property for sewage disposal. In essence they provide a yes or no answer to the matter of suitability. Vacant land evaluations have no formal expiration and therefore are typically preformed in situations where the property may not be developed for some time. It is important to note that following a vacant land evaluation, *an application to construct a sewage disposal system must be submitted and a permit must be obtained prior to system construction.*

What is seasonal high water table.

The seasonal high water table is the level of groundwater during normal wet periods of the year (typically the spring and fall). In most cases this level can be determined even during the dry season by a soil condition referred to as mottling, which is characterized by streaking or other pronounced color changes in the soil at a specific interval. For new construction current District Health Department #2 Environmental Health Regulations require minimum 3' isolation from the bottom of the drainfield to the seasonal high water table.

How do I maintain my septic system?

Proper maintenance is essential to the longevity of septic system operation. Septic tanks should be opened annually and checked for excessive sludge or scum buildup. Tanks should also be pumped every 2-5 years to remove excessive buildup of these materials.

It is also a good idea to practice water conservation. Installing water saving devices on faucets and toilets will reduce excessive the amounts of waste water from entering the system. Sump pump water, water softener recharge, and storm water runoff should not be discharged to the sewage disposal system. Spreading laundry usage throughout the week and using full loads will also reduce excess waste water and prolong the life of your system. It is important to fix leaking fixtures immediately.

What should I NOT put in my septic tank?

Septic tanks provide the primary source of treatment of house hold sewage and contain large amounts of bacteria which are essential for the treatment and breakdown of sewage wastes. These beneficial bacterial are very sensitive and may be adversely effected by materials which are introduced into the septic tank. It is important not to use excessive amounts of cleaners or disinfectants as these may harm the bacteriologic process of the septic tank. Do not put hazardous materials such as chemicals, petroleum products, solvents, or paints into your system. Avoid excessive use of a garbage disposal unit as these units increase the amount of solids going into your system that are difficult to break down. Other harmful materials include fats, grease, coffee grounds, paper towels, disposable diapers, and feminine hygiene products.

Can I put in my own septic system?

Yes, provided that all of the necessary permits have been obtained. The system must be installed according to the requirements of the local sanitary code and be approved by the local health department prior to use.

What if I need a copy of a permit for an existing system?

In order to locate an existing septic permit the health department staff will need the following information. Township, street address, subdivision and lot number (if applicable), property tax ID number, and any names of previous owners.