

Household Sewage Treatment Systems

Operation and Maintenance Program

The Butler County General Health District has begun locating and evaluating all household sewage treatment systems (HSTS) as required under O.R.C. 3718.02. This program began with an evaluation of sewage nuisances and stream contamination data. This information was used to determine which areas to inspect first.

The inspections are conducted in waves; letters are sent to homeowners informing them that they have 90 days to determine how their system will be inspected.

The Homeowner has the option to hire a service provider or request inspections from Health District staff Sanitarians.

After the first and second notice a final notice will be mailed to the home owner stating that they have 20 days left to respond. Should they not respond at all, a Sanitarian will visit the property to inspect the household sewage treatment system (HSTS).

Inspections consist of a visit to the property to determine the location, components and operation of the HSTS. This information is gathered by an evaluation of the topography, probing of the soil in the area, and walking across the soil absorption area to ensure sewage is not rising to the surface or illicitly discharged elsewhere.

Should a public health nuisance be discovered a notice of violation will be issued that shall require that the H.S.T.S be maintained free of nuisances.

The health department environmental staff will be available to guide home owners on the necessary steps towards system repair, alteration or replacement.

Butler County General Health District has access to an Ohio E.P.A. grant to provide financial assistance for a home owner that may qualify based on need.

Once a property has passed inspection and fee payment has been received, the property will be issued an operation permit. Operation permits for on-site sewage absorption systems are valid for ten years; upon expiration another inspection will be conducted to verify the continuous safe operation of the HSTS.

Surface discharging systems require annual inspections and an operation permit to ensure environmental safe operation to surface discharge.

Please contact the Director of Environmental Health; Jeff Agnew (513-887-5239) with any questions, comments or concerns.

Questions and Answers
Household Sewage Treatment System Program

Q. What is household sewage?

A. "Sewage" is liquid waste from humans containing animal or vegetable matter.

Q. Why is the Ohio Dept. of Health requiring an inspection and an operation and maintenance permit for my sewage system?

A. It is estimated that 25% of sewage systems are failing, causing polluted waterways. Ohio Revised Code Section 3718.02 (A) (7) requires this program be carried out in each county.

Q. Does this mean that my older household sewage treatment system will have to be replaced?

A. Sewage treatment systems that were in operation prior to 1/1/15 are not required to be replaced with a new sewage system, unless the system is causing a public health nuisance.

Q. What is a public health nuisance?

A. A public health nuisance includes but is not limited to, the presence of odors, untreated or poorly treated liquid sewage discharging to the ground, streams, water ways, or ground water.

Q. How much does an inspection and an operation and maintenance permit cost the home owner?

A. The inspection fee, if done by the Health Department, is \$31.00. The operation and maintenance permit fee is \$27.00. The permits are good for TEN YEARS.

Q. Is it required for the Health Department to make this inspection?

A. No. An inspection is required, however the homeowner has options: 1. Contract with a service provider for an inspection, or 2. have the Health Department conduct the inspection. Homeowners that meet testing requirements and registration may become a service provider and inspect their own H.S.T.S.

Q. What is the process when the health department makes an inspection?

A. The Health Department will let you know when we will be in your area. You can schedule an appointment if you wish, but it is not required. You do not need to be home for the inspection.

Q. Does this apply to mound systems, aerobic systems, and drip irrigation?

A. No, these systems already require annual inspections. This has been in place since 1975 for aerobic systems, and since 2007 for mound and drip irrigation systems.

Q. What do I do if I disagree with the inspector's decision?

A. You can appeal the decision with the Board of Health, an appeal board, or the court system.

Q. What if I can't afford to repair my system?

A. A fund may be available to assist low income persons with system repair, alteration or replacement.

Q. Who can I contact for more information?

- * Jeff Agnew, Butler County Health Department
- * 513-863-1770
- * agnewJB@butlercountyohio.org