

STANDARD SEPTIC SYSTEM OPERATION AND MAINTENANACE PLAN

1.0 GENERAL INFORMATION	
1.1 Property Information	
Property Location:	
Owner Name:	
Owner Phone:	
Owner Email:	
1.2 Contact Information	
Registered Septic Tank Pumper Information	
Septic Pumper Company:	
Contact Name:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Website:	
Septic System Designer Qualified Professional Information	
Septic Designer Company:	
Contact Name:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Website:	
Licensed Septic Installer/Contractor Information	
Septic Contractor Company:	
Contact Name:	
Phone:	
Email:	
Website:	
Department of Environmental Health and Quality - Questions and Permitting Information	
Duty Desk Phone:	(858) 565-5173
Duty Desk Email:	LWQDduty@sdcounty.ca.gov
DEHQ Inspection Line:	(858) 694-2553
Area Inspector Name:	
Area Inspector Phone:	
Area Inspector Email:	
Website:	Septic Systems (sandiegocounty.gov)
1.3 Location of System	
Keep a copy of the installation permit and the final "as-built" drawing showing the location of the septic system on the property with this Plan. Provide additional details in the Comments Section, if needed.	
1.4 Design Details for the Septic System	
Septic Tank Construction:	
Septic Tank Volume:	
Riser Construction/Depth:	
Effluent Filter Details:	
Flow Diverter Valve Details:	
Dispersal Field Type:	
Number and Dimensions:	
Observation Port(s) Details:	

2.0 OPERATION INSTRUCTIONS

2.1 Don't Allow Solids and Harmful Materials to Enter the Tank

- Harmful materials (ex. paints, solvents, grease, caustic drain openers, dental floss, feminine hygiene products, condoms, disposable diapers, cotton swabs, cigarette butts, coffee grounds, cat litter, paper towels, pesticides).
- Flushable wipes (they are not biodegradable).
- Commercial septic tank additives.
- Use bleach, disinfectants, and drain and toilet bowl cleaners sparingly and in accordance with product labels.

2.2 Practice Water Conservation

- Repair dripping faucets and leaking toilets.
- Run washing machines and dishwashers over the week rather than all in one day.
- Avoid long showers.
- Discontinue use of garbage disposals.
- Put kitchen waste in green yard waste bin or garbage bin instead of down the sink.
- Use water saving fixtures in faucets, shower heads, and toilets.

2.3 Protect the Dispersal Field

- Divert roof drains and other surface water drainage (from driveways and hillsides) away from the septic system.
- Do not allow the septic tank and leach field areas to be used for other purposes, including for storage of items. This will maximize functioning and minimizing damage to the system.
- Don't allow anyone to drive or park over any part of the septic system to avoid compacting the area which can reduce leach field functioning.
- Keep trees at least 10 feet or more away from septic tank and leach field areas to prevent clogging and damage.

3.0 MONITORING ACTIVITIES

3.1 Overall Functioning

- Slow draining toilets or drains, gurgling noise from plumbing vents.
- Sewage backup in house. Surfacing sewage at sewer cleanout for house – **needs immediate action!**
-
- Sewage odors.

3.2 Tank Access Ports or Observation Ports

- Ensure secured or locked.
- Ensure in good repair, no cracks.
- Surfacing sewage – **needs immediate action!**
- Water level in risers/observation ports – **levels at or near the ground surface needs immediate action!**

3.3 Dispersal Field for Signs of Failure

- Damp spots on the ground.
- Puddling or ponding of water on ground.
- Soggy lush growth over dispersal field.
- Distinct septic smell.
- **If any of the above is observed, system needs immediate action!**

4.0 MAINTENANCE – PUMPING ACTIVITIES

4.1 Pump Septic Tank

- Have the septic tank pumped by a septic pumping company registered with DEHQ.
- The septic tank must be pumped **at least once every three years** (mandatory minimum requirement).
- Pump both compartments of the tank.
- Check solids levels – if the bottom of the floating scum layer is within six inches of the bottom of the outlet pipe, or the top of the settled sludge layer is within 12 inches of the outlet pipe, then the tank needs pumping. Discuss with the registered pumping company if more frequent pumping is necessary based on the solids levels in the tank and the actual usage of the septic system, but must be at least once every three years.
- Ask the pumping company to provide you with a septic pumping report to document the operational status and integrity of the septic tank. See Section 4.3 for items to be documented, or use the attached pumping checklist.

4.2 Check Septic Tank and Dispersal Field for Issues

- Septic tank and dispersal field areas for signs of surfacing sewage or effluent.
- Risers or tank lids for damage.
- Water levels in tank – if water levels are at or near the top of the tank/above the outlet pipe.
- Flow back – if effluent from dispersal field flows back into tank at the outlet pipe.
- For root intrusion and/or cracks.
- Tank inlet/outlet/baffle pipes for damage.

4.3 Pumping Documentation

- Condition of septic tank area at time of pumping.
- Condition of dispersal field area at time of pumping.
- Observed sludge and scum levels in the tank.
- Observed water levels in tank and any flow back into tank.
- Observed root intrusion, cracking, or other damage to risers, tank lids, or tank.
- Observed damage to piping in the tank.

5.0 REPAIR ACTIVITIES

5.1 Immediate Interim Steps

- Contain and isolate all surfacing sewage to your property.
- Have septic tank pumped to keep sewage from surfacing until the system can be repaired.
- Reduce water usage and loading on the system until it can be repaired:
 - Make sure fixtures such as toilets and faucets are not leaking.
 - Don't use the washing machine.
 - Keep water use to a minimum.
 - Keep showers brief.

5.2 Troubleshooting and Repair Steps

- Contact a Licensed Installer Contractor registered with DEHQ to evaluate the system.
- Provide any installation documents to the Licensed Installer Contractor, including the permit information and As Built Layout Diagram. The As Built Layout Diagram from the Installation Permit will show the type and location for dispersal field repairs or replacements.
- The Licensed Installer Contractor will evaluate the system and will propose a solution to resolve the problem.

5.3 Obtain a Repair Permit from DEHQ

- Have the Licensed Installer Contractor obtain a repair permit from DEHQ by submitting the *OWTS Replacement/Repair Permit Application and Authorization Form*. A permit can only be issued to a Licensed Installer Contractor or, when a property owner has completed a consultation with DEHQ to demonstrate sufficient knowledge and skill for the installation, to an Owner-Builder. Do not let an unlicensed person repair the system.
- Make sure to obtain a copy of the permit documents and pay attention to any conditions of approval noted on the approved permit.
- For unique issues or site conditions, a site visit consultation with DEHQ staff may be necessary.

5.4 Make Repairs to the System and have Work Inspected and Approved

- Once the permit has been obtained, have the Licensed Installer Contractor make the authorized repairs to the system. The work should be done only as shown in the Layout Diagram from the approved permit. Any changes needed based on site conditions or issues found during the repair work must be approved by DEHQ before the work is started.
- After the installation is complete and before it is covered with soil, ensure that an appointment is made with DEHQ by calling the DEHQ Inspection Line at (858) 694-2553.
- After the repair/replacement has been inspected and approved by DEHQ, the area can be backfilled with soil. If the work is inspected but not approved, have the Licensed Installer Contractor complete any necessary work to obtain approval. Discuss any issues with the DEHQ inspector assigned to the permit/area.
- Keep copies of the approved permit and all other associated paperwork for the repair/replacement for future reference.

6.0 RECORDS RETENTION

- Keep records of pumping, inspections, permits, and other system maintenance activities.
- All septic pumping records must be kept for a minimum of six years, but it is recommended to retain the full historical records for the system for future reference.

7.0 COMMENTS/NOTES

Use this section to provide additional septic system design details or other information: