

PROCEDURE TO OBTAIN AN ON-SITE WASTEWATER SYSTEM PERMIT

APPLICATION

To obtain an on-site wastewater system (O.S.W.S.) permit, one must file an application at San Juan Basin Health Department, P.O. Box 140, Durango, CO 81302. The appropriate fee must accompany the application before field work is initiated. The basic fee for the permit is \$698. If a soil absorption system is applicable, a percolation test will be required for an additional fee of \$265. Please fill out the application clearly and accurately since this will be a legal document and part of a permanent record. The Assessor's Parcel number (12 digit number found on Property Tax Notice or Notice of Value) and the site address (to be provided by the County Building Department) are required to complete the application. Owners are required to sign the application or provide their agent with a power of attorney.

Every application for a septic permit must be accompanied by a Plot Plan, as specified in the local Regulation (Section 3.3 (A)(7)).

1. Property boundaries and adjacent street(s).
2. Existing and proposed buildings, easements, & buried utilities.
3. Existing and proposed water wells.
4. Existing and proposed septic tank and drain-field locations (including lagoons).
5. Any springs, surface water, ditches, and steep slopes.

Note: One may start with either a boundary outline (from the GIS), a Certificate of Survey copy (C.O.S.), assessors Plat (similar to a COS), or hand-drawn map with cultural features and basic measurements (approximate distances are usually adequate).

There are two general types of on-site wastewater systems in this area. The first is a septic tank and absorption field. An absorption field requires good permeable soil, which will be determined by a percolation (perc) test. When the site has adverse conditions for example where the water absorption rate is extremely slow or high seasonal ground water levels occur, shallow bedrock, steep slopes, small lots and/or setback requirements interfere, a Colorado Registered Professional Engineer design may be required. As of January 27, 2003 permits for lagoons will not be issued.

SITE EVALUATION

To determine the suitability of a proposed home site for an O.S.W.S., a site evaluation will be required. An Environmental Health Specialist will conduct the site evaluation unless the applicant desires to have a Colorado Registered Professional Engineer do the site evaluation and submit the results to San Juan Basin Health Department. The site address should be posted on the road at the property.

During the site evaluation, a soil profile is recorded from an eight foot test pit to locate any subsurface conditions that would affect the design of an O.S.W.S. A perc test is conducted to indicate the rate that water moves through the soil, thus determining the sizing criteria for the absorption field. The surface features of the site are evaluated to determine if they would have any influence on the location of the proposed system.

PREPARATION FOR SITE EVALUATION

It is the responsibility of the applicant to prepare the site for evaluation. The necessary steps are as follows:

Percolation Holes: Dig (4) four holes, 4 to 12 inches in diameter to a depth of 30 inches approximately 50 feet apart in a square pattern adjacent to the proposed absorption field. Perc holes should not be auger drilled because it could cause the test to fail. Scratch the bottom and sides of the lower half of each hole with a sharp pointed tool to remove the smeared or compacted soil. Remove the loose dirt from the bottom of the hole and replace with 2 inches of coarse sand or fine gravel.

Call San Juan Basin Health Department at (970) 247-5702 to schedule the test with the appropriate Environmental Health Specialist. Completely fill the holes with water to pre-soak the soil at least 8 hours, but not more than 24 hours prior to the perc test. Cover the perc holes with boards to prevent the water from freezing or causing injury to people, livestock and wildlife. A minimum of five (5) gallons of water per hole must be available at the site.

Soil Profile Pit: Excavate a pit 8 feet deep or to bedrock, whichever is less. The pit must be adjacent to the area of the proposed absorption field (not in the field area). San Juan Basin Health can provide you with a list of licensed contractors that are available for excavation services.

Arrangements for an Environmental Health Specialist to perform the site evaluation should be made at least 2 working days in advance through San Juan Basin Health Department at (970) 247-5702 (extensions listed below).

Permit, System Installation and Final Inspection of System

When all required information on the application is submitted with the appropriate fee and upon successful completion of the site evaluation, and O.S.W.S. permit will be issued specifying the type, size, location and any additional instructions for the system to be installed.

If you wish to hire someone to install you system, San Juan Basin Health Department O.S.W.S. Regulations require that the company/contractor have a valid System Installer's License and a copy of the O.S.W.S. permit prior to commencing excavation. If you the property owner want to install your own system, San Juan Basin Health Department will provide you with instructions.

When construction of the on-site wastewater system has been completed and prior to backfill, the installer or property owner shall notify San Juan Basin Health Department requesting that a final inspection be performed.

This request should be made at least 2 working days in advance of the actual inspection date.

A table of minimum horizontal distances (in feet) between system components is provided below to help determine a suitable location for the proposed on-site wastewater system.

SET BACK REQUIREMENTS	Septic Tank	Vault Privy	Lined ET Bed	Lagoon/NA after 1-27-03	Absorption Field
Wells, Springs	50	50	60	100	100
Potable Water Supply Lines	10	10	10	25	25
Cistern	25	25	25	25	25
Dwelling or Occupied Building	5	15	15	100	20
Property Lines	10	10	10	80	10
Lake, Stream	50	25	50	50	50
Dry Gulches	10	10	10	15	25
Lateral Irrigation Ditch	10	25	25	25	25
Steep Slopes	25	25	25	25	25

The minimum horizontal distance from easement boundaries is 30 (thirty) feet.

Note: Advanced treatment type systems require an ongoing maintenance agreement/contract.

To promote the longevity of your septic system avoid using additives, flushing chemicals or pharmaceuticals and try to use biodegradable detergents and cleaning products.

Environmental Health Director:
 Mike Meschke 218
Administrative Assistant:
 Wanda Humphrey 222
Durango Office: 970-247-5702

Environmental Health Specialists:
 Chad Engelhardt 224
 Brian Larson 1741
 Royce Kinnaman 171

Pagosa Springs Office:
 Royce Kinnaman 970-264-2409