

# SECTION 22

## MAINTENANCE AND CARE OF AN ON-SITE SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM

It shall be the property owner's responsibility to maintain the subsurface sewage disposal system serving his/her property in a safe and sanitary manner. A property owner may obtain a copy of the final subsurface sewage disposal system inspection information from the Department (where records are available).

### A. Protection of the Platted or Designated Sewage Disposal System Areas

Each and every platted (i.e., the subsurface sewage disposal system areas shown on a legally recorded plat) or designated (i.e., where not platted, the subsurface sewage disposal system areas are described on the septic system installation permit) subsurface sewage disposal system areas are to be treated as permanent easements (i.e., they are permanent easements when shown on a platted lot). Removal or abolishment of these platted or designated subsurface sewage disposal system area easements can only be accomplished when a proper municipal/public sewer system is installed and is able to provide service to said property. No encumbrance or physical structure shall be placed in such a manner so as to interfere with the platted or designated sewage disposal areas intended purpose. It is the property owner's responsibility to ensure that the septic tank, pump tank (where applicable), system and all related components are protected and remain free from any unauthorized disturbances or encroachments.

Examples of prohibited disturbances and encroachments of a platted or designated subsurface sewage disposal system areas include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Any excavation or filling on or adjacent to platted or designated subsurface sewage disposal areas for the purposes of:
  - (a) Building or placing an in-ground or above-ground swimming pool.
  - (b) Planting or removal of trees or other decorative vegetation.
  - (c) Placement or construction of any unauthorized structures.
  - (d) Placement of any type of utility line.
2. Landscaping practices that involve cutting and/or removal of soil or the importing of fill material onto a platted or designated subsurface sewage disposal area.
3. Construction of driveways, turnarounds, parking areas or any other type of paved area or impervious surfaces.
4. Crossing of platted or designated subsurface sewage disposal system areas with vehicular traffic (e.g., automobiles, trucks, construction vehicles, etc.) that would compact the soils.
5. Placement of unauthorized structures upon platted or designated subsurface sewage disposal system areas, including:
  - (a) Prefabricated buildings (any type)
  - (b) Detached garages.
  - (c) Barns/sheds.
  - (d) Green houses.
  - (e) Gazebos.
  - (f) Swimming Pools (in-ground or above-ground).
6. Construction of permanent appendages to an existing dwelling or structure which may include:
  - (a) Sidewalks.
  - (b) Porches.
  - (c) Decks (constructed of any type materials).
  - (d) Patios.
  - (e) Retaining walls.

Note: See Table S13-1 in Section 13, regarding required minimum distance setbacks or buffers.

7. Gutter down-spouts, storm water drains, footing and foundation drains, garage floor drains, basement sump pumps, storm drains or any clean water source shall not be connected into the septic tank or to any other portion of an on-site subsurface sewage disposal system (e.g., pump tank, disposal field trenches, etc.).

## **B. Maintenance and Care of a Subsurface Sewage Disposal System**

Any and all maintenance shall be conducted by individuals who are specifically licensed for this purpose by the Department.

Maintenance and care of a subsurface sewage disposal system shall include, but is not limited to:

1. Pumping of the septic tank at regular intervals; the recommended frequency is every two (2) to five (5) years or as otherwise deemed necessary.
2. Pumping of the pump tank (where applicable) at regular intervals; the recommended frequency is every two (2) to five (5) years or as otherwise deemed necessary.
3. Proper cleaning of an effluent filter at regular intervals *in accordance with the applicable provisions outlined in Section 37. (where such devices were installed prior to the adoption of these regulations); if present, they will be attached to the outlet tee inside of the septic tank.*
4. Proper pumping and cleaning of grease traps, where applicable, at regular intervals, in accordance with the provisions of these regulations. See Section 11.
5. Periodic inspection, and maintenance where necessary, of all electrical controls and alarms to ensure reliable and proper service.
6. *Perpetual routine inspection, operation and maintenance of an advanced treatment system (ATS) in accordance with the applicable provisions outlined in Section 38.*
7. *Perpetual routine inspection, operation and maintenance of a subsurface drip disposal system (SDD or Drip) in accordance with the applicable provisions outlined in Section 39.*

## **C. General Aspects of Caring for a Subsurface Sewage Disposal System**

1. It shall be the property owner's responsibility to practice care in his/her household habits. It shall be prohibited to:
  - (a) flush excessive kitchen grease, fats, oils, skin emollients, or other non-biodegradable kitchen-type substances such as meat bones, coffee grounds, etc., into the subsurface sewage disposal system;
  - (b) flush or place non-biodegradable objects such as, including but not limited to, cigarettes, disposable diapers, feminine hygiene products, rags, plastic items or containers, or other such materials into the subsurface sewage disposal system;
  - (c) pour harsh chemicals or toxins such as, including but not limited to, pesticides, paints, paint thinners, household chemicals, gasoline, oil, transmission fluid, brake fluid or any other detrimental salts, solvents, or acids into the subsurface sewage disposal system.

The property owner should be certain to purchase and use household products which are specifically labeled as being *safe and suitable for use in or with a septic tank/subsurface sewage disposal system.*

2. Subsurface sewage disposal systems do not have unlimited capacities. Excessive discharges of household wastewater into the system will result in the malfunctioning of the system. Care must be taken to properly maintain all plumbing fixtures in order to prevent leakage and subsequent excessive discharge into the system. The practice of water conservation will extend the life of any type of subsurface sewage disposal.

### 3. Special Note Regarding Garbage Disposals

*Though these devices are not illegal, the Department strongly advises against their use in any dwelling or structure which depends upon a subsurface sewage disposal system for its wastewater disposal.*

Garbage disposals or garbage grinders, typically attached to kitchen sink drains, should be used with discretion in order to avoid the placement of excessive amounts of organic (*i.e.*, typical food wastes) waste materials (also called *solids*) into the septic tank. The additional wastes introduced to a septic tank via the garbage disposal will hasten the build-up of the solids in the tank. The presence of a higher volume of solids in the septic tank increases the potential for possible damage to sewage/effluent pumps (where present) or the disposal field trenches.

Should these devices be utilized within a dwelling or structure, the recommended septic tank pumping frequency, as discussed in the previous *Subsection B*, should be increased to every two (2) years.

## **D. Subsurface Sewage Disposal System Malfunctioning**

Where any subsurface sewage disposal system which fails to function (*i.e.*, discharges sewage upon the ground surface), the owner of said system shall be required to secure a permit for repair of said system, from this Department, in accordance with Section 34. Any and all repairs shall be conducted ~~by~~ individuals who are specifically licensed for this purpose by the Department.

## **E. Damages Occurring to a Subsurface Sewage Disposal System After Its Installation, Inspection and Approval by the Department**

The Department accepts no liability where a subsurface sewage disposal system failure or malfunction occurs as a result of violation of the provisions of these regulations by the home owner, property owner, builder, installer or others. Additionally, the Department accepts no liability where a subsurface sewage disposal system failure or malfunction occurs as a result of an act of God.