

Attachment 4

Division of Environmental Health (DEH) Draft Informational Handouts



Division of Environmental Health

100 H Street - Suite 100 - Eureka, CA 95501

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Humboldt County Safe Homes Program Frequently Asked Questions

The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Environmental Health (DEH) is participating in the Humboldt County Safe Homes Program. For a limited time, homeowners may choose to bring their existing, unpermitted onsite wastewater treatment systems (i.e., septic systems) into compliance without accruing the normal penalties. Regular permit application fees apply, and applications will be reviewed with respect to regulations and policies in effect at the time of application.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS)

Individuals seeking Division of Environmental Health (DEH) permit approval of a sewage treatment system installed without benefit of permit must first demonstrate that the development which the system serves is permissible through the Planning and Building Department. If development is permissible, the sewage treatment system location and design specifications must be shown to meet current regulatory requirements.

1. Is soils testing required and do I have to hire a registered engineer?

Soils testing is required. System design is based, in part, on site specific soil conditions. A Qualified Professional is required to do soils testing, to evaluate, and to confirm (or propose) system design. Qualified Professional includes Professional Geologist, Registered Civil Engineer, Registered Environmental Health Specialist and Certified Soil Scientist.

2. How will I know if the sewage treatment system which was installed can be approved?

An optional, confidential pre-application office consultation with an Environmental Health Specialist is offered at rate of \$149.00 per hour in quarter hour increments to help homeowners identify potential challenges to permitting and to aid them in their decision to participate in the program. For a consultation, complete to the best of your ability, the *Confidential Pre-application Consultation* and call (707) 445-6215 or (800) 963-9241 to schedule an appointment. If a homeowner elects to participate in the Safe Homes program, a Qualified Professional must document and describe the existing OWTS and submit a design package to DEH through the Building Inspection Division before the end of the program period.

3. Are plastic septic tanks acceptable?

If the tank is proven to be IAPMO (International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials) certified, and the installation and integrity are confirmed by a Qualified Professional, a plastic tank may be approved.

4. What if the existing OWTS does not meet required specifications for the soil conditions in which it was installed?

It may be possible to enlarge or modify components of an OWTS to bring it into compliance. It is also possible that an existing system cannot be made to meet current requirements. To obtain an OWTS permit when current standards are unable to be met, a Qualified Professional must propose abandonment of the existing system and a design for a compliant replacement.

Waterless Toilets

Composting and Incinerating Toilet

1. What governs permitting of these types of toilets?

Humboldt County Code (HCC) Title VI Div 1 Chapter 5 Waterless Toilet Systems. Waterless toilets may be permitted for owner-occupied single-family dwellings where the general requirements of this ordinance are satisfied.

2. If I want to get my permit now, how do I get started?

- Read HCC Title VI Div 1 Chapter 5 for current requirements. Graywater systems are no longer part of this program and are governed under Chapter 15 of the 2019 California Plumbing Code.
- Contact the Planning and Building Department to determine if the waterless toilet also requires approval by the local Building Official.
- Request a *Waterless Toilet System Permit Application* from DEH at (707) 445-6215 or envhealth@co.humboldt.ca.us.
- Submit your completed application and associated fee at the DEH office.

Pit Privy

1. What governs permitting of these type toilets?

Humboldt County Code (HCC) Title VI Div 1 Chapter 3 section 613-5. Pit privies are generally prohibited by HCC; however, privies may be considered acceptable by DEH if explicit criteria outlined in the above ordinance is met.

2. If I want to get a permit for my privy, how do I get started?

Demonstrate that the structure which the privy serves is permissible through the Planning and Building Department. Submit site evaluation results prepared by a Qualified Professional to show the privy is located in an area suitable for a conventional septic system and that a suitable reserve area exists. HCC does not specify that a *permit* is required for a pit privy; however, its use must be *approved* by DEH (see HCC 611-3). Staff time spent to review such projects will be invoiced per hour at the current hourly program rate: \$149.00.

Water Wells

How do I permit a water well that was constructed without a permit?

A water well constructed without a permit can only receive a permit if an applicant confirms proper construction. This can be done via the Well Driller's Completion Report. It may be possible for a well to be over drilled and retro-fitted with a proper seal. A C57 licensed well driller should be consulted and can apply to DEH for a permit. Wells constructed prior to the County's February 19, 1973 permit requirement do not require a permit.



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Humboldt County Safe Homes Program Confidential Pre-Application Consultation

If you wish to have a confidential consultation with an Environmental Health Specialist about your existing unpermitted sewage treatment system or water well before you apply for a permit, complete the appropriate questions below and call (707) 445-6215 or (800) 963-9241 to schedule an appointment. Time spent will be charged at the current hourly rate (\$149.00) in quarter hour increments. Payment will be taken at the time of the consultation by cash, check, or money order. Payment may also be made by credit card; however, transaction fees will apply. Bring this completed form to the consultation.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS)

1. In what geographical area of Humboldt County is your parcel located?
2. Do you know the location of the OWTS on your parcel?
3. How many structures does it serve?
4. Provide any information you have on the system.
 - a. Tank dimensions or volume.
 - b. Number and length of trenches.
 - c. Trench type (perforated pipe or gravel-less chambers) and depth.
 - d. Other (age of system, operational history).
5. Layout and setbacks: Provide a plot plan showing the general layout of the existing OWTS and approximate distances to the following items:
 - a. Nearest property line.
 - b. Building foundation.
 - c. Water courses or wetlands.
 - d. Steep slopes, cuts.
 - e. Swimming pools.
 - f. Wells or springs.
 - g. Driveways and parking areas.
6. What is the soil type and how deep is groundwater in the vicinity of the OWTS?

Waterless Toilet

Composting or Incinerating Toilet:

1. Does toilet serve a single family dwelling on owner-occupied property that is not within reach of community sewer?

2. Does the parcel have an existing septic system? If no:
 - a. How is graywater discharged?
 - b. How is kitchen sink water discharged?
3. Are you willing to have a Qualified Professional demonstrate that there is area suitable for future installation of a primary and/or reserve leach field on the parcel?
4. Are you willing to monitor and maintain the toilet and share information (problems, solutions, recommendations) once per year with the Division Environmental Health (DEH)?
5. Are you willing to have the finished product tested twice annually and submit results to DEH?

Pit Privy:

1. Is the parcel greater than 2 acres in size, located in a rural area and zoned for residential use?
2. Is the pit covered with a structure that excludes flies and other disease vectors?
3. Is the privy greater than 50 feet from the nearest property line?
4. Does the parcel have an existing septic system? If no:
 - a. How is graywater discharged?
 - b. How is kitchen sink water discharged?
5. Are you willing to have a Qualified Professional demonstrate that there is area suitable for future installation of a primary and/or reserve leach field in the vicinity of the privy?
6. What is the soil type and how deep is groundwater in the vicinity of the privy?

Water Well

1. Can you provide a Well Completion Report Form (DWR 188)? Year installed: ____
 You may request a CA Department of Water Resources search:
https://water.ca.gov/-/media/DWR-Website/Web-Pages/Programs/Groundwater-Management/Wells/Files/Well-Completion-Request-form_ay_19.pdf
2. How far is the well from the nearest property line and septic system?
3. Is there evidence that an annular sanitary seal was installed during well construction?

For Office Use Only		
Date of Consultation: _____	Start Time: _____	End Time: _____
Amount Due: _____	Amount Collected: _____	Insp. Initials: _____
Receipt #: _____		



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Humboldt County Safe Homes Program

Instructions for Site Evaluators

for Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS)

The Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Environmental Health (DEH) is participating in the Humboldt County Safe Homes Program. For a limited time, homeowners may choose to bring their existing, unpermitted onsite wastewater treatment systems (i.e., septic systems) into compliance without accruing the normal penalties. Regular permit application fees apply and applications will be reviewed with respect to regulations and policies in effect at the time of application. Please submit your application package in accordance with current requirements. These instructions provide only a summary of the required steps. An optional, pre-application office consultation, with an Environmental Health Specialist to help homeowners understand the scope of their project is offered at the current hourly rate (\$149.00), in quarter hour increments. For a consultation, complete to the best of your ability, the *Confidential Pre-application Consultation* and call (707) 445-6215 or (800) 963-9241 to schedule an appointment.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

- The goal for this program is to encourage property owners to bring their properties into compliance through the waiving of penalties.
- A Qualified Professional must document and describe the existing OWTS and submit a complete design package to DEH through the Building Inspection Division before the end of the program period. A Qualified Professional includes Professional Geologist, Registered Civil Engineer, Registered Environmental Health Specialist and Certified Soil Scientist.
- Penalties are waived, but systems must comply with all other state and county requirements including payment of standard fees.
- DEH has the final word on whether systems meet current regulation and policies.

STEPS:

1. Investigation of Existing System

Determine what has been installed. Direct field observation and an as-built drawing of the system installation by a Qualified Professional is required. Document the following details of system components:

- a. Septic tank: size, construction material, condition, and location.
- b. Distribution: location of distribution box, equal or serial distribution.
- c. Leach lines: number, length, material, width and depth of trenches.

2. Soils and Water Table Evaluation and Description

Professional evaluation and description of soils and water table adjacent to existing primary field and at identified reserve field. Sites with restrictive conditions will likely require DEH onsite verification of one or more of the following:

- a. Minimum of three (3) hand augers or one (1) test pit per dispersal field location.
- b. Hydrometer and/or percolation testing.
- c. Description of soil profiles.
- d. Wet or dry weather testing, as needed.

3. Inspections

In lieu of inspections by DEH, Qualified Professional must submit photographic documentation of site and existing system components along with a signed statement certifying system meets required criteria including these verifications:

- a. Existing system is not in failure.
- b. Leach lines are on contour and receiving equal distribution of effluent.
- c. Septic tank inlet/outlet are watertight.
- d. Effluent filter and septic tank lid risers are present.

If new construction or major modifications are required to bring a system into compliance, construction activities must be inspected by DEH personnel. It may be possible in some instances for a Qualified Professional to perform, document, and submit those inspection results upon pre-approval from DEH.

4. Design Package

DEH will evaluate the application package in accordance with standard criteria.

- a. Qualified Professional must prepare an application package that meets standard requirements as found in the current version of Humboldt County OWTS Regulations and Technical Manual.
- b. Normal permit fees must be submitted with application package.
- c. If an existing system does not meet required sizing criteria, an appropriate design for expansion of the system must be submitted.
- d. If an existing system cannot meet current requirements, the design must include abandonment of the existing system and construction of a compliant system.

5. Other Information as Needed

Depending on the location of the property and the site conditions, additional information may be requested by DEH to process a building permit under the Safe Homes Program.