

ON-SITE INSIGHT

FOURTH QUARTER 2015 A PUBLICATION FOR ON-SITE SEPTIC PROFESSIONALS DECEMBER 10, 2015



Septic System Care Begins With You



Randy Oxier presenting on septic system do's and don'ts.

For the third year, the On-Site Sewage program offered a workshop for Key Peninsula residents to promote the basics of septic system care. The Key Peninsula is part of the

Marine Recovery Area, a focal point for several Health Department water quality improvement initiatives. Strong turnout—32 people attended—was a result of communication planning and community engagement efforts.

A special thank you to Washington On-Site Sewage Association, FloHawks, A Advanced Septic Services, Express Septic Service and Richard L. Wilkerson & Associates.

For more information about the event, check out our [news release](#).

If you are interested in helping out with future workshops, please contact Jihae Han at jhan@tpchd.org.

Renew and Recertify

Have you received your certification renewal packets? We will send these to industry professionals this month. Submit these required items to the Health Department by Feb. 15 and avoid a late fee.

Septic Professionals

- Your training documentation.
- Completed application plus fee.

Firms

- Certificate of liability insurance.
- Valid contractor license.
- Completed applications plus fees.

If you haven't received your packet by January, or if you have any questions please contact Anne Harrington at (253) 798-7678 or aharrington@tpchd.org.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

OSS Compliance Corner	2
Property Sales, Inspections...	2
OnlineRME Trainings Ahead	3
Winter Water Table Reviews	3
Advance Preparation	3
Modest Fee Increase	4

OSS Compliance Corner

Proprietary Systems O&M: Steps to Take

Want to work on proprietary systems? Make sure you have written approval from the manufacturer or patent holder—and make sure to file that approval with us. O&M Specialist—need to submit this documentation to the Health Department before working on proprietary components in order to comply with our On-Site Sewage regulations (Chapter 2, Section 48. E4).

An authorization certification or a permission letter from the manufacturer or patent holder are acceptable forms of documentation. Submit documentation during the initial or re-certification process or as soon as you get authorization.

Once we receive your approval documents, we will file the information with your certification records at the Health Department. You may only perform operations and maintenance work on proprietary systems if you have submitted approval documents. Only pumping is allowed without specific approval from the manufacturer or patent holder (unless otherwise stated by the manufacturer or patent holder).

If you are not certified, please refer customers to our list of companies at www.tpchd.org/septicservicecompanies to make sure an authorized and certified specialist/firms perform work on proprietary systems. Questions? Contact Renée Avelino at (253) 798-2831 or ravelino@tpchd.org.

Proprietary Systems in Pierce County				
AdvanTex	Ecoflo	Glendon	Nibbler	NuWater
AIRR	ECOPOD	Multiflo	Nibbler Jr/Lite	Whitewater
Biomax	FAST	Naydic	Norweco/Singulair	

Property Sales, Septic System Inspections, Deficiencies and Resolutions



Whenever a real estate transaction involves property that an On-Site Sewage System serves, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department requires a Report of System Status (RSS). This is a critical step in the transaction to ensure

that both the buyer and the seller identify and correct problems with the septic system. When problems exist—resolving them can slow down the property transaction.

We receive nearly 4,000 RSS applications annually. Of those, we place approximately 30% on hold for unresolved deficiencies discovered during the Health Department inspection or noted on the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) inspection report.

Learn about the common deficiencies, how you can resolve them in our [guidance document](#). We are sharing this document with industry professionals as a reference to help inform customers of required corrections that arise during the RSS process.

If you have any questions contact George Waun at (253) 798-6485 or gwaun@tpchd.org.

OnlineRME Trainings Ahead

In April of 2014, some of you attended the Washington On-Site Sewage Association (WOSSA) training sessions. The training was part of a quality improvement grant focused on septic system inspections and possible revisions to OnlineRME questions.

As the grant project concluded, WOSSA compiled recommendations for improvements. Now a new grant project will fund specific quality improvement steps. We plan to conduct training on the revised onlineRME questions for all Pierce County certified septic professionals in February and March of 2016.

WOSSA will host the trainings which you will benefit from taking before full implementation of the new questions begins on March 31, 2016. The Health Department and WOSSA will provide more information as the grant project moves forward.

If you want to know more about this project, contact John Thomas at WOSSA at (253) 770-6594, executivedirector@wossa.org or George Waun at (253) 798-6485 or gwaun@tpchd.org.

Winter Water Table Reviews Make Sure Your Site is Inspection Ready

Septic system designers: The time for winter water table reviews is approaching! Please refer to Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department's [policy](#) concerning these evaluations. Dec. 1 was the deadline. If you haven't already, please submit your applications as soon as possible to ensure that they will be included in this year's review. The Health Department will conduct initial site inspections for all properties submitted for review. Please ensure that sites are accessible with test holes and monitoring ports flagged and numbered. Please make sure older test holes are cleared of plant growth and re-excavated.

If we find that the property isn't ready for inspection, we will notify designers. We won't review these applications until you confirm that the properties are properly prepared for inspection. If you have questions contact Leigh McIntire at (253) 798-6144 or lmcintire@tpchd.org.

Advance Preparation Ensures Smooth Process

Investing the time to make sure your site is ready for Health Department inspections helps to avoid delays to your timeline. Because several agencies comment on a building permit application, the timeframe from excavation of test hole on the site to the design submittal to Health Department could extend by a number of months. This can result in overgrown lots and inaccessible or sloughed in test pits. To avoid unnecessary delays, ensure property is ready for inspection when you submit the design to the Health Department.

We require a minimum of four test holes for septic design review, two in both the proposed primary and reserve areas. This requirement is a minimum. We could need access to more to evaluate soil conditions in the dispersal areas and justify the proposed design. All submittals for proposed or expanding drainfields or other absorption areas should meet this requirement. If you have questions please contact Leigh McIntire at (253) 798-6144 or lmcintire@tpchd.org.

Modest Fee Increase Covers Technology, Staffing Costs

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department has revised fees for 2016. The On-Site Sewage and Well Permitting Program will increase fees by approximately 5%. In October, we sent the draft fee schedule to industry by email for review. The fee increases cover rising costs in:

- Technology upgrades as we move toward the ability to accept applications online.
- Staffing costs for our certified professional enforcement person.
- Other staffing expenses such as medical coverage and cost of living increases.



The Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health approved the 2016 fee schedule at its Nov. 18 meeting. It goes into effect Jan. 1, 2016.

Review the fee schedule at www.tpchd.org/fees. If you have any questions please contact Gary Porter at (253) 798-6569 or gporter@tpchd.org.

On-Site Program Statistics

TYPE	Full Year 2014	Jan.–Nov. 2015
Building Site Applications	517	571
Remodel	365	366
Repair	254	230
Report of System Status	3,966	4,442
RME Inspection Reports	10,938	11,181
RME Pumping Reports	8,398	7,761
EMMR	1,209	1,150

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department offices will be closed in observance of these holidays:

- Dec. 24 (Half Day)–Christmas Eve
- Dec. 25–Christmas Day
- Dec. 31 (Half Day)–New Year’s Eve
- Jan. 1–New Year’s Day
- Jan. 18–Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- Feb. 15–President’s Day

On-Site Sewage and Well Permitting Program Staff

On-Site General Information
 Extended Maintenance/Minor Repair (EMMR)
 Report of System Status (RSS)
 Stub Out/Final

Anne Harrington
 Emma McDaniel
 Gary Porter
 George Waun
 Greg Alton
 Jackie Parker
 Jihae Han
 Laurel Parshall
 Leigh McIntire
 Monica Roppo
 Peggy McMurtrie
 Renée Avelino
 Rich Dickerson
 Robert (Bob) Suggs
 Tina Friedrich
 Tracy Jones
 Vergia Seabrook

Professional Certification
 Operation and Maintenance
 Program Manager
 OSS Field Specialist Lead III
 OSS Field Specialist
 Application Processing
 Education/Outreach/Marketing
 Asbuilt Lookup/Permits/Finals
 OSS Field Specialist Lead II
 OSS Field Specialist
 RSS Compliance
 OSS Compliance
 Well Permitting Specialist Lead II
 OSS Field Specialist
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