

# ON-SITE INSIGHT

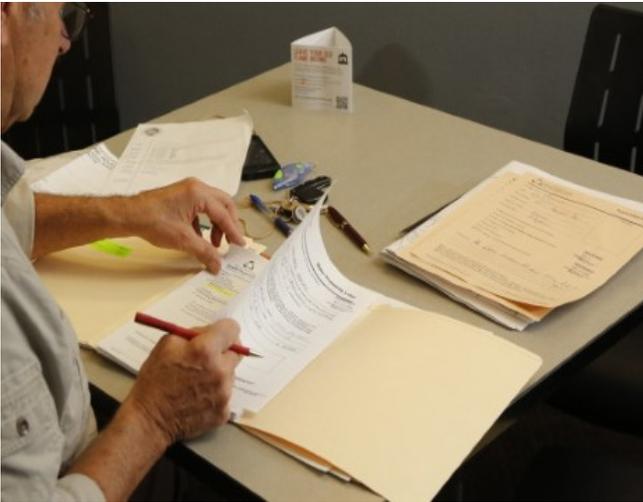
THIRD QUARTER 2016

A PUBLICATION FOR ON-SITE SEPTIC PROFESSIONALS

AUG. 30, 2016



## More Efficient Process for Plat Applications



The On-Site Sewage and Water Resources programs recently updated the Health Department's plat application. The new application more clearly asks for the information necessary for the Health Department to review the project, and it more closely resembles applications from Pierce County. A land division checklist was also developed with the goal of getting complete plat applications. This will reduce staff review time. We have met with Pierce County PALS staff to get the permit techs familiar with the form and Health Department requirements. Use the new application and checklist and complete the appropriate fields to help make the platting review process more efficient. Find the form at [www.tpchd.org/plat](http://www.tpchd.org/plat). Questions? Contact Leigh McIntire, (253) 798-6144 or Michelle Harris, (253) 798-7683.

## A Reminder about Designer Stamps

The state engineering board has specific requirements for designers to stamp work they have performed. At a minimum, the stamp must show the name, license number, and license expiration date. Designers must sign across the stamp and put today's date next to the signature. Refer to the [State Department of Licensing](#) for more information. Questions? Contact Leigh McIntire, (253) 798-6144.



Refer to the State Department of Licensing for more information.

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### Note Correction:

Second quarter 2016 *On-Site Insight's* article publication of *On-Site Inspections Explained* should have had the definition:

**Service Inspection:** Any inspection performed that does not conform to any of the other inspection types. This is usually in response to a complaint from a customer of system malfunction. This would include inspections performed to document minor repair work not defined as EMMR or requiring a repair permit. This inspection does not trigger a next inspection date to the Health Department's database.

# OSS Compliance Corner

## Update Your Employee Information to Stay in Compliance

Owners or business managers, have you hired a new technician, specialist, or installer since our [annual certification](#) period? Before putting them to work on septic systems in Pierce County, you must submit the following to the Health Department:

1. [O&M/Installer](#) application
2. Continuing Education Units (CEU's)
3. [Certification Fees](#)

If your new hire worked for another O&M septic firm in Pierce County within the year, ask him/her to provide you with a copy of their CEU's and certification document provided by the Health Department. Or contact us to confirm their certification status. Once confirmed, you will only need to complete steps 1 and 2.

Keep your certified employee head count current to stay in compliance. Check out our [annual certification](#) handout for more about the Health Department's certification requirements. Questions? Contact [Renée Avelino](#), (253) 798-2831.

## New Ways to File a Service Complaint

On-Site Compliance has a new electronic complaint form available on the bottom of our general On-Site Septic [mainpage](#) and at [www.tpchd.org/complaintform](http://www.tpchd.org/complaintform).

Two Ways to Submit the Form.

1. Print and mail the document to the Health Department to the address shown on the form, or
2. Save and email a copy to our new compliance mailbox ([ehcpenforcement@tpchd.org](mailto:ehcpenforcement@tpchd.org)) for processing. You can add attachments (e.g., photo receipts).

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### Why did the Health Department create a septic service complaint form?

We want to make it easier to report and process complaints.

#### Who can use the form?

The forms are for customers who had their on-site sewage system serviced in Pierce County; O&M firms, Installation Firms, Designers or employees; and Health Department staff.

#### What is a complaint?

Complaints are against non-certified plumbers or business representatives who perform O&M work in Pierce County; or O&M certified individuals or firms who violate our Pierce County Environmental Health Code, [Chapter 2 On-Site Sewage](#) regulations.

#### Can I still call in a complaint?

Yes. Call (253) 798-6470, then press "0" when prompted. You will need to leave a voicemail that answers all the questions from the complaint form.

Questions? Contact [Renée Avelino](#), (253) 798-2831.



# Answers to Your Questions

Our annual workshop for Certified Professionals in January generated some great questions. Here they are with our answers:

**Question:** Is it ok to transfer sewage from an old tank into a new tank?

**Answer:** The Health Department strongly discourages this practice because it disrupts the normal settling function in the septic tank that protects solids from entering the drainfield.

**Question:** Lift station failures—who do certified professionals notify?

**Answer:** Notify the sewer utility that operates the lift station immediately.

**Question:** When septic system failures happen, who makes the decision to connect to sewer versus OSS repair?

**Answer:** If the property is within a sewer utility service area, the utility service would make this decision using research and documentation from the designer.

**Question:** Confirmation of EMMR submittal is needed. How will this improve?

**Answer:** Technology and website upgrades will look to improve this customer service in the future.

**Question:** Will as-built records lookup be streamlined?

**Answer:** You can look up as-built records online at [www.tpchd.org/asbuilt.php](http://www.tpchd.org/asbuilt.php). An update to our webpage layout may make this task more user friendly but the information currently available is all we have. Please remember to search, if needed, by both the address and parcel number to help find all available records. If you think that a record exists but you can't find it, call the as-built line at (253) 798-6577.

**Question:** Should the Health Department remove "in progress" classification from reporting options in OnlineRME?

**Answer:** This option stays but please note that we will consider an "in progress" report as incomplete. You should complete your reports as soon as possible to get credit for an inspection.

**Question:** Are there RSS requirements for large On-Site Septic Systems?

**Answer:** Large systems are under State Department of Health jurisdiction. As a result, the Health Department has no local RSS requirements.

**Question:** Will the Health Department add metal tanks as a potential deficiency to the 'RSS Deficiencies with Resolutions' form?

**Answer:** The Health Department will add metal tanks to the RSS processing documentation in the next form revision. Metal tanks will be considered a 'failure' and an RSS deficiency requiring replacement unless the tank is certified by an installer or O&M specialist to be free from material defect and safe to use.

## Reminder:

Craft3 Regional Loan Program is up and running. Continue to refer your customers to Craft3 for a septic repair loan.



# Good to Know: Limits of Your Designer's License

The following information about designer requirements to do O&M is from the Washington State Department of Licensing's Washington Board Journal, Spring 2016, Number 57, Page 14.

"Question: I'm a Licensed Designer and am considering expanding my practice to include the Operations and Maintenance of On-Site Sewage Systems. The local Health Department says I must be licensed with them. I think they are wrong, and my Designer's license exempts me from their requirements. Am I right?"

"Answer: No. Your Designer's license authorizes you to investigate existing On-Site Wastewater Systems and design possible replacement or repair. It does not give you the authority to install systems or to monitor the performance of such systems under operation and maintenance duties. You should check with the local health jurisdiction for their performance or credential requirements to perform installation or operation and maintenance services."

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

Sep. 5–Labor Day  
Nov. 11–Veterans Day  
Nov. 24 & 25–Thanksgiving  
Dec. 26–Christmas Day Observed

## On-Site Program Statistics

TYPE	Full Year 2014	Full Year 2015	Jan.–Jul. 2016
Building Site Applications	517	605	352
Remodel	365	404	260
Repair	254	255	179
Report of System Status	3,966	4,735	3,219
RME Inspection Reports	11,017	12,006	8,040
RME Pumping Reports	8,402	8,408	5,024
EMMR	1,209	1,219	725

## 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  
Judy Monhollen  
Kristen Farley  
Laurel Parshall  
Leigh McIntire  
Maggie Morehouse  
Monica Roppo  
Peggy McMurtrie  
Renée Avelino  
Rich Dickerson  
Robert (Bob) Suggs  
Tracy Jones  
Vergia Seabrook

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

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(253) 798-3811  
(253) 798-7392  
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(253) 798-7678  
(253) 798-4788  
(253) 798-6569  
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(253) 798-3529  
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