

ON-SITE INSIGHT

SECOND QUARTER 2016 A PUBLICATION FOR ON-SITE SEPTIC PROFESSIONALS

MAY 12, 2016



Your Role in Reporting Sewage Problems



One of the primary goals of the On-Site Sewage Program is to protect the public from surfacing sewage. As a Certified Septic Professional you have an obligation to report any failure of an on-site sewage system immediately to the Health Department. We created a notification letter you can provide to property owner or clients if you notice a sewage problem during a service call you are unable to correct. The letter spells out your responsibility as a certified professional and talks about the steps the Health Department will take toward correcting this problem. Find the letter at www.tpchd.org/sewageletter. Please make this notification letter available to your personnel in the field. Questions? Contact Gary Porter, (253) 798-6569.

First-Ever On-Site Certified Professional Workshop a Success

Nearly 70 septic professionals attended the Health Department's On-Site Certified Professionals Operations and Maintenance Workshop Jan. 9 and 14. The On-Site Sewage and Code Enforcement programs focused on industry best practices with a variety of topics including onlineRME reporting, Extended Maintenance and Minor Repairs and our work to streamline repairs, and the future revisions of OnlineRME questions. We received helpful feedback from those who attended and plan to incorporate that information into future workshops. Find the [presentations](http://www.tpchd.org/OMWorkshop) at www.tpchd.org/OMWorkshop. Questions? Contact Gary Porter, (253) 798-6569.

Find presentations at
www.tpchd.org/OMWorkshop

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OSS Compliance Corner

The Power of the Comment Box: Remember to Include Field Notes in Your Reports

Certified septic firms can avoid potential follow-up conversations with Health Department staff or a compliance case by including key details from your field notes in your reports. Those include required inspection, follow-up, property sale, pump or extended maintenance and minor repair (EMMR) reports.

Find our reporting requirements in the On-Site Sewage regulations, Chapter 2, Section 43: Each report shall be complete, accurate and describe the condition of the OSS at the time of service, including all work completed, work required or recommended to be performed and the operational status of the OSS.

We recommend including important details generated on work orders or field notes when submitting your OnlineRME reports. Below are some quick tips:

- Enter field notes in the COMMENTS AND GENERAL INSPECTION NOTES space of the report. (See example below.)
- Report septic status and site conditions if there are deficiencies.
- Briefly note any important discussions with property owners/tenants for the record.

Accuracy and effective communication between field and office staff who report are key to successful reporting. Questions? Contact [Renée Avelino](#), (253) 798-2831.

COMMENTS & GENERAL INSPECTION NOTES	
Deficiencies Noted: deficiencies must be corrected to ensure proper longevity of the Onsite Sewage System.	
RECOMMEND REPLACING BROKEN LID	
RECOMMEND REPAIRING DISCHARGE LINE THAT HAS SETTLED & RESETTING TIMER SETTINGS TO THE CORRECT GALLONS PER DAY AFTER REPAIRS	
GENERAL SITE & SYSTEM CONDITIONS	
The General Site and System Conditions were:	Fully Inspected
All Components accessible for maintenance, secure and in good condition:	NO - Deficient
All required service performed (if no - specify omitted inspection items in notes):	YES
Effluent leaking onto the surface of the ground from any component? (If yes, explain in comments)	NO

More Loan Funding for Septic System Repairs

Last year the Health Department applied for and received a grant from the State Department of Ecology to create a Regional Clean Water Loan Program that would benefit 10 counties to start. This program will be another tool homeowners can use to repair their septic systems. [Craft3](#) was selected as the Financial Institution Partner.

The regional approach to this loan program will bring in counties that may not have been able to participate in their own loan program. The nearly \$9 million in funding is providing capital for more septic repair loans. There will be no change to the loan terms and/or the process for contractors in Pierce County, but there may be extra marketing and outreach support. We will let you know when the new program begins and how you can engage in these efforts.

In the meantime, continue to refer Pierce County property owners to [Craft3](#) to apply for septic system repair loans under our existing contract. Since 2014, [Craft3](#) has approved or put in the pipeline 56 property owners for loans of about \$1.1 million. This support helps people stay in their homes, stabilizes property owners' investments, and protects our ground and surface water. Questions? Contact [Gary Porter](#), (253) 798-6569. Information about [Craft3's](#) loan is available at www.craft3.org/cleanwater, cleanwater@craft3.org, or (888) 231-2170.

On-Site Inspections Explained

There are many types of inspections. The definitions below will help you determine which type to enter into OnlineRME. Find these definitions on page 9 of the [Pierce County User Guide for OnlineRME Reporting](#).

Inspections that trigger the next inspection date into the Health Department's database

These inspections require a full inspection of system components:

Routine Inspection: Pumping only does not satisfy this requirement. These inspections are:

1. An annual or triennial inspection to meet the requirements of the Operation and Maintenance provisions of the On-Site Sewage regulation.
2. To support a remodel or repair application.
3. At the request of the property owner that does not fit any other definition.

Property Sale: Performed for a property sale.

Startup/Service Inspection: The initial inspection performed immediately after the septic system is fully installed.

Inspections that do not trigger a next inspection date to the Health Department's database

Intermittent Inspection: Prescheduled inspections performed between the required "Routine" inspections (e.g., 6-month contractual inspection for proprietary devices).

Follow-up Inspection: An inspection performed to provide new information or to document corrections of deficiencies found during a previous inspection or pumping. If the corrections fall within the description of EMMR then an EMMR inspection must be submitted.

EMMR Inspection: An inspection performed following Health Department notification of an "Extended Maintenance and Minor Repair" project as defined in Health Department Regulation, Chapter 2, Section 33. This requires a full inspection of all system components.



Welcome to Our Newest Member Maggie Morehouse

Enthusiastic Maggie Morehouse joins the On-Site Sewage and Well Permitting team. She received her Bachelors in Environmental Health from The Evergreen State College. She comes with eight years of experience in the Health Department's Compliance Program. Maggie has experience in assisting property owners through the repair process when they had surfacing sewage, sometimes requiring legal action to prompt a response. She understands how a properly designed, installed, and maintained system is important to performance. She enjoys gardening, sewing, crafts, weekend construction projects and watching Seahawks and Silvertips play.



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

May 30–Memorial Day
 Jul. 4–Independence Day
 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.–Apr. 2016
Building Site Applications	517	605	175
Remodel	365	404	137
Repair	254	255	108
Report of System Status	3,966	4,735	1,522
RME Inspection Reports	10,938	11,917	4,139
RME Pumping Reports	8,398	8,406	2,667
EMMR	1,209	1,219	376

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
 Kristen Farley
 Laurel Parshall
 Leigh McIntire
 Maggie Morehouse
 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
 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 Field Specialist
 OSS Office
 PALS Representative

(253) 798-6470
 (253) 798-3811
 (253) 798-7392
 (253) 798-6479

(253) 798-7678
 (253) 798-4788
 (253) 798-6569
 (252) 798-6485
 (253) 798-4821
 (253) 798-3529
 (253) 798-4754
 (253) 798-6023
 (253) 798-2888
 (253) 798-6144
 (253) 798-6058
 (253) 798-4751
 (253) 798-6142
 (253) 798-2831
 (253) 798-2885
 (253) 798-2868
 (253) 798-2895
 (253) 798-4435
 (253) 798-3740

EHsepticssystem@tpchd.org
 EHsepticssystem@tpchd.org
 EHsepticssystem@tpchd.org
 EHsepticssystem@tpchd.org

aharrington@tpchd.org
 emcdaniel@tpchd.org
 gporter@tpchd.org
 gwaun@tpchd.org
 galton@tpchd.org
 jparker@tpchd.org
 jhan@tpchd.org
 kfarley@tpchd.org
 lparshall@tpchd.org
 lmcintire@tpchd.org
 mmorehouse@tpchd.org
 mroppo@tpchd.org
 pmcmurtrie@tpchd.org
 ravelino@tpchd.org
 rdickerson@tpchd.org
 rsuggs@tpchd.org
 tfriedrich@tpchd.org
 tjones@tpchd.org
 vseabrook@tpchd.org