

Sewage Enforcement Officers (SEO), employed by each municipality throughout the state of Pennsylvania, are responsible for site testing, reviewing permit applications and sewage facilities planning modules (for land subdivisions), issuing permits as authorized by Act 537 and conducting complaint investigations and inspections that are necessary to implement the act and the regulations thereunder.

# Outline of soil testing and permitting for on-lot septic systems

Read the following information thoroughly. It is important and may help to avoid delays or possible problems that can occur during the permitting process. It is highly recommended that the applicant seek the services of a qualified consultant or contractor to assist you in the layout, design and construction of the on-lot sewage disposal system. Inform the SEO whether your land will be going through a subdivision prior the scheduling of testing (see NOTE#2).

## SOIL TESTING

I. Have a primary proposed area chosen for your septic system (absorption area) on your lot. The soil testing must be conducted at that location. An alternate testing site should be proposed in the event that the testing finds unsuitable soil at the primary proposed location. The site should typically be less than 11% slope, within 10' of property lines, 100' from any water well and 50' from lakes, streams or ponds. The amount of square footage needed for the absorption area will vary based on the proposed gallons per day flow, and will typically be between 800 to 1500 square feet.

II. The applicant must have the availability of a contractor and/or backhoe/mini-excavator for the **soil profile test**. This first part of the testing requires an excavated pit to be dug, typically 4' or deeper, 3' wide and 5' long, within 10' of the proposed septic system (absorption area) location. Several pits may need to be dug at different locations on the lot to find suitable soils. If suitable soils are found on the lot during the soil profile, the SEO will flag the proposed area at (typically) 6 hole locations for the **percolation test**.

III. The **percolation test** requires the site to be prepared by the applicant or contractor. The applicant is required to dig, or have a contractor dig 6 holes that are 20" deep (or at the depth given by the SEO), provide a 55 gallon open top drum of water at the percolation testing site, and provide ¼ of a 5 gallon bucket of #1 stone on the site. When the site is prepared, the SEO is to be notified and the SEO will schedule for testing. It is not necessary for the contractor or applicant to be present during the percolation testing.

IV. At the completion of testing, the results are supplied to the applicant via e-mail or standard mail along with a checklist of municipal fees due, an application and any other applicable forms. A completed application and the municipal fees are due at this time. The payment process and submittal process will be explained in the testing results mailing.

## PERMITTING

- I. As stated, at the conclusion of testing, a completed application and the municipal fees are due. The payment process and submittal process will be explained in the testing results mailing.
- II. In order to obtain a permit for construction, a design of the system and all related features of the project must be submitted by the applicant for review by the SEO. The design is to be done by another SEO, engineer, or individual with knowledge of all of the applicable state regulations in Chapter 73 of Title 25 PA code, and according to the list of required items on the back page of the application.
- III. After the design has been reviewed and found to contain all applicable information and meet all applicable state regulation, the permit can be issued and the construction of your sewage disposal system may begin, following proper notification of our office.

**NOTICE:** The applicant is responsible for notifying or having the contractor notify this office/ SEO prior to the start of construction of the on-lot sewage disposal system. The following inspections are *required* during the construction of an Elevated Sand Mound type system:

- INSPECTION #1— When the proposed absorption has been chisel plowed.
- INSPECTION #2— When the sand bed is in place and leveled to +/- 2" per 100 ft.
- INSPECTION #3— When the distribution piping is in place and the system is ready to be pressure tested.
- INSPECTION #4— When the final berm is to grade, the system has been covered and seeded, the alarm is in place, and all other components are completely installed

NOTE #1 No structure may be occupied before the sewage system is finally inspected, approved and covered. Absorption area shall be covered by the permittee within 5-calendar days after final inspection and approval to prevent damage.

NOTE #2 Lots contained as part of a subdivision of land which occurred after May 15, 1972 are required to have subdivision planning approval from the municipality and the Dept. of Environmental Protection. This is usually in the form of a letter containing a subdivision date and code, addressed to the original applicant. Prior to the issuance of your on-lot sewage disposal system permit, our office must be furnished with a copy of this letter or a statement from the applicant indicating the appropriate subdivision location, date and code.

For additional information on the PA State on-lot sewage disposal program or to make an appointment, contact Steven Egenski, SEO at [segenski@hotmail.com](mailto:segenski@hotmail.com) or 570-239-7086