

ON SITE SEWAGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

A major factor influencing the health of individuals where public or community sewerage is not available is the proper treatment and disposal of human wastes and other sewage, including industrial and processing waste. Many diseases, such as dysentery, infectious hepatitis, thyroid and paratyphoid, and various types of gastrointestinal problems are transmitted from one person to another through the fecal contamination of food and water, largely due to the improper disposal of human wastes. Chemical contaminants affecting individuals through individual drinking water supplies have been attributed to groundwater pollution caused by improper disposal of on-site sewage. Because of such problems, every effort shall be made to prevent the existence of these and other potential health hazards.

Safe disposal of all wastes, human, domestic and industrial, is necessary to protect the health of the individual family and the community and to prevent the occurrence of nuisances. Basically, to accomplish satisfactory results, all such wastes must be disposed of in such a manner that:

1. They will not contaminate any approved drinking water supply;
2. They will not give rise to a public health hazard by being accessible to insects, rodents, or other possible carriers of disease that may come into contact with food or drinking water;
3. They will not give rise to a public hazard by being accessible to children;
4. They will not violate laws or regulations governing water pollution or sewage disposal;
5. They will not pollute or contaminate the waters of any bathing beach, shellfish breeding ground, stream or lake used for public or domestic water supply, or for recreational purposes; and
6. They will not give rise to a nuisance due to odors or unsightly appearance.

Where public or community sewage disposal systems are not accessible, these criteria can be met by the discharge of sewage to an approved on-site sewage management system. Such a system, properly designed and maintained and properly installed where soil and site conditions are favorable, can be expected to function satisfactorily. Experience through the years has shown that adequate supervision, inspection, and public health maintenance are required to insure compliance in this respect.

In order to facilitate this program, the Georgia Department of Community Health has adopted Rules and Regulations for On-Site Sewage Management Systems, Chapter 290-5-26. Individuals wishing to utilize an on-site sewage management system should contact the local county health department for information on the various types of systems approved for use and permitting requirements. Each county board of health is responsible for issuing permits for the installation of on-site sewage management systems and inspecting these installations prior to completion.

A copy of the technical manual is available from the Georgia Department of Community Health. Copies of this manual may be obtained by calling the Environmental Health Section at 404-657-6534.

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