



DELAWARE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Environmental Health Division

Application & Permit Procedure for On-Lot Sewage Disposal Systems

The Delaware County Health Department is responsible for preventing or minimizing public health hazards caused by malfunctioning on-lot sewage disposal systems. Delaware County regulations are consistent with the Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act 537. Because new construction growth, continued turnover of existing properties, and a lack of available public sewerage facilities in many areas, the demand for properly designed and installed on-lot sewage disposal systems is critical.

Permits are required for the installation, repair or modification of on-lot sewage disposal systems. Obtaining a permit is dependent upon the satisfactory completion of this application process, including specific forms, in compliance with the Rules and Regulations of the Delaware County Health Department in effect at the time the application is filed. This process also requires at least one acceptable percolation test and at least two acceptable test pits for soil profile examination.

The issued permit constitutes authorization to proceed with the planning and installation of the on-lot sewage disposal system specified in the application. This permit is only a permit to proceed. It indicates only that the issuing authority is satisfied at the time of issuance that the installation of the system shall be in accordance with the Rules, Regulations and standards of the Delaware County Health Department and the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Administration of Sewage Facilities Permitting Program, and Chapter 73-Standards for Sewage Disposal Facilities. Issuance of a permit shall not preclude the enforcement of other health laws, ordinances, or regulations in case of malfunctioning of the system.

The permit is neither a contract, nor a guarantee of either final approval or of satisfactory functioning of an on-lot system. Permits issued according to this process should be capable of serving a structure for many years if properly sited, properly constructed, and properly maintained by the property owner.

While an issued permit is valid for three years from the date of issuance as specified by state regulations, it is possible that interim changes in State and/or County regulations, physical conditions in the soil caused by construction activities or prevailing weather conditions, seasonal high water tables, perched water tables, and/or unauthorized changes in the location of the disposal system from the site of soil tests applied to the issuance of the permit, could result in rejection of the system design, revocation of the issued permit and/or the imposition of additional technical requirements or component modifications before final approval would be granted, even after a sewage disposal system has been installed. The cost of such additional requirements, alterations, or modifications is the responsibility of the owner/applicant. Statistically, such additional requirements are rare.

Necessary Forms

- Application for On-Lot Sewage Disposal System Permit. Available in hard copy only.
- Sewage Application Record form and Sewage Application Rider - submit 2 copies
- Site Preparation Requirements, Procedures for Site Testing, and Absorption Area Requirements for Individual Lots
- Site Investigation and Percolation Test Report for On-Lot Disposal of Sewage
- Specifications for Proposed Sewage System – 2 copies
- If needed - Sewage Pump Data Sheet or Design Sheet for Holding Tanks - 2 copies

The following procedures must be followed to obtain the permit:

1. Part 1 of the Application for an On-Lot Sewage Disposal System Permit must be filled out by the applicant (property owner, owner in equity or an authorized agent).
2. **Two copies of the Sewage Application Record form and Sewage Application Rider must be submitted** by applicant or his agent along with the sewage permit application fee prior to the submission of any other forms. The permit fee must also be paid at the time the Record/ Rider forms are submitted, prior to conducting the required soils testing. Fees can be found on our website at <https://delcopa.gov/health/environmentalhealth.html>. No testing will be scheduled until the permit fee has been paid. The two copies of the Sewage Application Record form and Sewage Application Rider form should be filled out at the same time, and contain exactly the same information, as Part 1 of the application form. The Application Rider form fulfills the requirements of a 1978 amendment to the PA Sewage Facilities Act 537. It must be completed if someone other than the actual property owner is filing the application, conducting tests (Soil profile exam and/or perc tests), attending meetings or receiving notices and other communications concerning the permitting and installation of the system. Payments can be in the form of a check or money order made payable to "Delaware County Health Department". Credit card payments can also be made by using PayPal.

3. The applicant or authorized agent is responsible for preparing observation test pit excavations and performing the percolation tests. The applicant/agent must schedule all tests with DCHD. Testing will only be scheduled after the appropriate forms and fees have been submitted (see #2 above). DCHD reserves the right to dictate when the percolation test may be performed in order to schedule and monitor the procedures. **Prior to any site excavation the applicant/agent will contact PA One-Call (800.242.1776) to have all utilities marked.** A One-Call serial number must be provided to DCHD on the day of testing to verify that the call was made. Testing will not occur without this number.
4. A representative of this Department must inspect soil conditions and complete a soil profile description in a minimum of two deep observation test pits on each individual lot. This inspection must be conducted prior to performing the percolation test so that any limiting zones can be detected and the depth of the percolation test holes can be determined. The observation test pits should be dug in accordance with all isolation distances and safety considerations.
5. The percolation test holes must be dug and the tests run in accordance with the Department's requirements. An agent of the Department must be present for the percolation tests to determine compliance with the requirements. Falsification of any tests or errors in following the prescribed procedures is cause for denial of the permit and the initiation of legal action against the applicant. The Site Investigation and Percolation Test Report for On-Lot Disposal of Sewage form (Form 3 800-FM-WSWM0290A) must be completed for each test. It is important that all parts of this form be completed, preferably electronically. The soil description section may be completed by the applicant or the consultant and will be reviewed and verified by the Department. A supplemental sketch showing the exact location of the percolation test holes and observation test pits **in relation to permanent landmarks and property markers must be provided by the applicant.** The form will be returned to the applicant if it is incomplete or improperly filled out. Written notice of the deficiencies will be included.
6. State law requires that all deep observation test pits and percolation test holes be backfilled and covered within three days after receiving notice of completion from this Department. (See Act 537, Section 7 (8)). Unless otherwise stated, this notice is given in the statements written on the bottom portion of the field report form issued by the DCHD representative for the specific observation or test being conducted.
7. Following the completion of the percolation test and verification of the soil conditions by a representative of the Department, the applicant may submit the design of the proposed sewage system. The design of the system is to be submitted as follows:
 - a. Application for On-Lot Sewage Disposal System Permit (Form 3 800-FMWSFR0290) - the applicant or his agent must complete sections I & III in their entirety. It is essential that these forms be completed legibly and accurately. Please make sure that the print is readable on all carbon copies.
 - b. Two (copies of the plot plan, required in Section III, (8.b.)), on paper measuring 8 1/2" X 11" (or folded to this size) must be attached. The plot plan should be clean, neat, and legible and include at least the following items:
 1. Property lines and adjacent streets
 2. Dimensions and distances in feet
 3. Location of:
 - a) All buildings, driveways, right of ways and easements.
 - b) Treatment tanks, dosing tanks and filter tanks, distribution boxes, other components and conveyance piping
 - c) All wells, springs and surface waters on this and adjacent properties
 - d) Proposed sewage disposal system (from 2 non-parallel property lines)
 - e) All percolation test holes and test pits on this property
 4. Plans and cross section of the proposed absorption area indicating:
 - a) Depth in inches (beds or trenches)
 - b) Length in feet (beds or trenches)
 - c) Width in feet (beds or trenches)
 - d) Perimeter of the entire drip irrigation absorption area (if drip is proposed)
 5. Reference to north
 6. Direction of slope and percent
 7. Distance to the nearest stream if any
 8. Isolation distances as set forth in Title 25 PA Code, Chapter 73.13
 9. Other information as required by this Department
 - c. Two copies of the appropriate Specifications for Proposed Sewage System form must be properly completed and returned with the application form. Two copies of the Sewage Pump Data Sheet or Design Sheet for Holding Tanks should be returned if pumps or holding tanks are to be utilized. Necessary pump data is included on the Drip Irrigation Specification sheets.

d. The Site Investigation and Percolation Test Report for On-Lot Disposal of Sewage form must be submitted at this time.

Note: if any of the above items are missing or incomplete, the application will be returned for correction.

8. The properly issued permit must be shown to the local municipality when requesting a building permit, must be kept on the job site during construction, and must be given to the Health Department representative at the time final inspection is made.
9. Before covering the completed system, a request for a final inspection allowing at least three full working days notice must be made to and acknowledged by the Department. When the entire installation is approved, the Approval to Cover portion of the permit will be signed. The system must then be covered within five calendar days. No system or portion may be covered before final inspection and written approval is given by the DCHD Sewage Enforcement Officer. Your copy of the permit and the design should be kept with your valuable papers or posted in an appropriate place and passed on to future owners.
10. A diagram showing the exact location of all system components installed and all other improvements (new or existing) on the property, including wells and water lines must be submitted prior to obtaining final approval for the use of the system. This is called an As-Built Diagram and must contain all of the details required in the plot plan used for permit issuance, but should reflect exact conditions after construction.
11. If a permit is denied or revoked "for cause", you may appeal in writing within 10 days of the action for a hearing before a Delaware County Health Department Official. You may have legal counsel offer evidence on your behalf at the hearing. A decision on the appeal will be provided in writing.

Updated 1/19/2023