



Policy Regarding Sewage "Holding Tanks" In Failing Septic System Areas

Date: April 1, 2013

Purpose: This policy is based on protecting the public health and the environment. Holding tanks are not suitable for new construction, adding additional living space to an existing building, or change of uses generating additional wastewater flow. Installation of a holding tank system to replace a failing septic system shall be required when it has been determined that an on-site system that discharges to the soil cannot be installed that could be expected to provide long-term adequate protection of public health or the environment.

Subject: The following minimum guidelines are to be considered as to when sewage "holding tanks" are to be required in lieu of some other method of on-site waste disposal.

Guidelines: Installation of a holding tank system shall be required when any of the following apply:

1. Inadequate lot size and other restraints such as well distances, buildings, topography, water bodies, streams or any other physical objects preclude a sufficient land area to install a suitable replacement system.
2. Insufficient land area exists to install a properly sized replacement system because of previous on-site waste disposal system installation locations.
3. Properties where the seasonal high water table is expected to be closer than 24 inches to the land surface in combination with other limiting factors. All historical information in the immediate vicinity of the said area for system installation will be utilized to determine the expected seasonal high water table. When available actual test holes will be installed in the proposed installation repair area to observe the water table during wet season periods. Additionally, the presence and depth to low chroma soil colors in a test hole may be used to estimate maximum seasonal high water levels.



4. Site and soil conditions, including surface and subsurface drainage characteristics, indicate an on-site waste disposal system in the proposed installation area would not be expected to function "hydraulically" on a year around basis.
5. Any other data that would indicate a sewage "holding tank" is warranted such as historical septic system failures in the immediate vicinity of the proposed installation area. Wastewater volumes or house bedroom numbers that would cause system replacement size to exceed available installation area.



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April 2, 2013

John Nickerson, Director of Environmental Health
Queen Anne's County Health Department
208 N. Commerce Street
Centreville, Maryland 21617

Dear Mr. Nickerson:

Thank you for the opportunity to review Queen Anne's County Health Department's Policy Regarding Sewage Holding Tanks in Failing Septic System Areas. This policy is consistent with Maryland regulations and direction provided by Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). In those circumstances where an existing septic system is failing and site conditions are such that an on-site disposal system that discharges to the environment cannot be installed without compromising the public health, a holding tank may be required. Holding tanks may not be used for new construction or where an increase in the existing volume of wastewater is proposed. Sites should be evaluated on a case by case basis in consultation with MDE's On-Site System Division's regional consultant prior to requiring a holding tank.

If you have any questions on the above matter, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Jay Drager, Deputy Program Manager
Waste Water Permits Program
Water Management Administration
Maryland Department of the Environment

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