



State of Oregon  
Department of  
Environmental  
Quality

# Procedures and Requirements for Installing a New Septic System

For homes and businesses outside areas served by large sewer systems, sewage is treated and dispersed into the soil by septic systems. The primary components are a septic tank that collects and treats waste and a drainfield to capture, disperse and filter treated waste.

## Are permits required for septic systems?

Yes. A permit will describe in detail the requirements for installing and maintaining your septic system. Permits help ensure that every septic system is sited and constructed properly so that human health and the environment are protected.

## Whom do I call to get started?

In some Oregon counties, DEQ acts as the local onsite agent providing septic system inspections, site evaluations and issuing permits as part of Oregon's "Onsite" Septic Systems program. In other counties, local governments provide this service. Locate [contact information](#) for your county on [DEQ's Onsite Septic Systems web page](#) or call DEQ at (541) 686-7905 or toll free in Oregon at (800) 844-8467.

## What permit do I need?

A **construction-installation permit** is usually what is needed to install a septic system for a home or a commercial system that has a projected sewage flow less than 2,500 gallons per day. This permit is valid for 1 year. For an additional fee it may be renewed or reinstated if it takes longer to complete construction and installation of your septic system.

If you have questions about permits for larger or more complex systems, contact the onsite agent for your county.

## How do I get a permit?

There are two steps involved:

### Step 1: Complete a site evaluation

A site evaluation must be completed to determine which type and size of system is suitable for your property. This is usually done prior to subdividing a property and though not required, prior to selling a property.

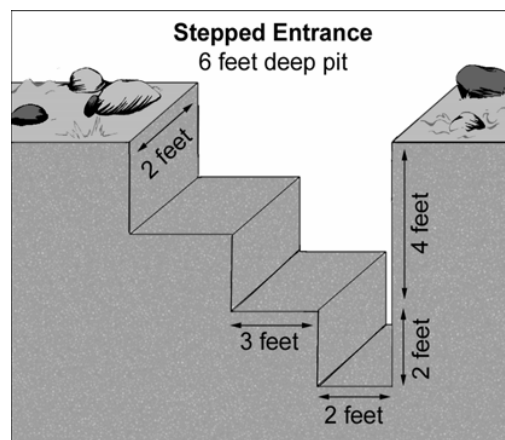
The suitability of a proposed site for a septic system is determined by the site and soil conditions and the depth/seasonality of the water table. Other factors include the property size, locations of surface waters, wells, cuts and fills, and availability a sewer connection. There must also be enough area available for a full future replacement septic system. These criteria are prescribed in [Oregon Administrative Rules](#), Chapter 340, Division 071. A copy of the rules can be obtained from the [DEQ's Onsite Septic Systems web page](#).

## Complete the site evaluation application

Fill out an application and submit to the appropriate office along with the required exhibits and the correct fee. Directions to the subject property must be included.

## Don't forget your test pits

You must also provide at least two test pits approximately 75 feet apart (more are necessary for large systems or difficult sites) in the proposed drainfield area. The specific requirements for test pits are provided with the site evaluation information packet.



The entrance to a 6-foot test pit may be sloped or stepped as soil conditions warrant.

## Prepare for an evaluation

After the application has been received and deemed complete, a local onsite agent will visit your property to perform the site evaluation.

**Water Quality Onsite Program**  
165 East 7th Avenue  
Suite 100  
Eugene, OR 97401  
Phone: (541) 687-7338  
(800) 844-8467  
Fax: (541) 686-7551  
Contact: Randy Trox  
[www.oregon.gov/DEQ](http://www.oregon.gov/DEQ)

*DEQ is a leader in restoring, maintaining and enhancing the quality of Oregon's air, land and water.*

Depending on weather, test pit placement and if additional test pits are needed, more than one site visit may occur.

### **Receive a site evaluation report**

You will receive a site evaluation report that specifies the approved area, the type and size of the septic system required and any special requirements. Should the site be rejected, you have 90 days in which you may provide additional test pits for evaluation with no additional fees. The report will also give you information such as applying for a site evaluation report review and the opportunity to apply for a variance from any rule or standard.

### **Step 2: Obtain a permit, construct the system and inspect**

Getting the permit, system construction, and system inspection are all part of Step 2:

#### **Obtain a permit application packet**

You must have a favorable site evaluation report in order to apply for a permit to construct your septic system. A permit application packet can be obtained from the local onsite agent.

#### **Refer to your land use statement**

Does your property have land use compatibility approval on the DEQ-approved form for what you are proposing to do? If you aren't sure, contact the local agency (in most cases the county the property is located in) responsible for land use. You will need a completed land use compatibility statement to complete your permit application.

#### **Complete the permit application**

Submit a completed permit application, along with the required fees, exhibits, fees, construction plans and information about the approved uses of your property.

#### **Receive your permit and start construction**

A construction-installation permit is issued within 20 days of receiving a completed application. Once you have the permit in hand, you may proceed with the construction of the septic system as specified in the approved plans and the permit. Any design changes must receive prior approval from your from DEQ or the onsite agent for your county.

**Note:** A septic system must be constructed by either the property owner or a [DEQ-licensed installer](#) using DEQ-approved materials and equipment that meet minimum standards. All equipment must be installed and operated according to the manufacturer's specifications. If

you have questions about installers or approved materials and equipment discuss with your local onsite agent.

### **Don't cover that tank just yet**

A "pre-cover" inspection before it is covered with soil) of the installation is required unless waived by the local onsite agent as the 'last step'. Some complex systems, such as sand filter systems, require inspections at various stages of construction and these inspection requirements are specified in the permit.

To initiate the pre-cover inspection the installer must provide the local onsite agent an "as-built" plan, materials list and system certification. You will be given a form to list this information. Fill out this form and within seven (7) days of receipt of this completed form, the local onsite agent will either conduct or waive the inspection.

### **Certification is in the mail**

After completion of a satisfactory inspection you may cover the installation. You will be sent a certificate of satisfactory completion in the mail. Upon issuance of the certificate, you may begin using the septic system.

### **What are the permitting fees?**

Each step of the process has a separate application and fee that are determined by the type of system and the amount of proposed sewage flow. To obtain specific fee information for a particular application, please contact the local onsite agent.

### **For more information**

Contact DEQ at (541) 687-7338 or toll free in Oregon at 800-452-4011. Information is also available on [DEQ's OnSite web page](#).

### **Alternative formats**

DEQ is committed to accommodating people with disabilities. Please notify DEQ of any special physical or language accommodations or if you need information in large print, Braille or another format.

To make these arrangements, contact DEQ Communications and Outreach in Portland at 503-229-5696 or call toll-free in Oregon at 800-452-4011; fax to 503-229-6762; or email [deqinfo@deq.state.or.us](mailto:deqinfo@deq.state.or.us).

People with hearing impairments may call 711.