

Test Pit Preparation for Onsite Sewage Evaluations

When do you need a “Test Pit?”

When you apply for a permit to construct an onsite sewage disposal system, a County inspector will have to visit the proposed construction site. A test pit allows the inspector to test and examine the soil and soil layers and will help determine if it is appropriate to proceed with construction. This process is often referred to as a “site evaluation.”

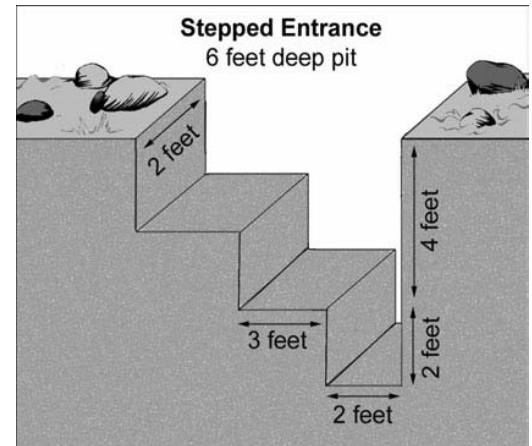
Preparing the test pit

To provide for stabilization and safe access, standard test pits for site evaluations must be prepared in the following manner:

- The bottom of the pit must be at least 2 feet wide and 4 feet long.
- The depth must be at least 4.5 feet and not exceed 5 feet.
- In some instances, pits may only need to be excavated to the layer of hard rock or to the water table if that layer is less than 5 feet.
- The second pit needs to be located in the center of the replacement drainfield area.
- The test pits must be a minimum of 75 feet apart.

6-Foot test pits

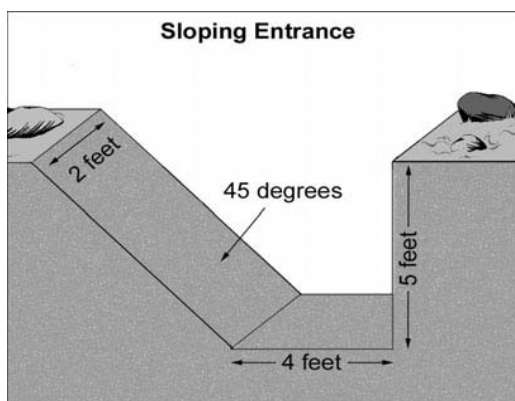
At the request of the inspector, test pits may need to be excavated to a depth of 6 feet as shown in the figure below:



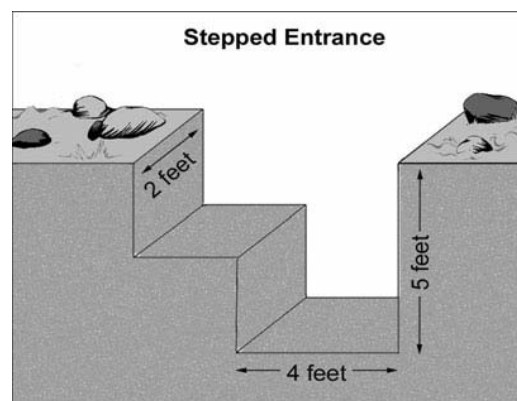
The entrance to a 6-foot test pit may be sloped or stepped as soil conditions warrant.

Providing Access to the Standard Test Pits

For easy access, one end of the test pit shall be either:



Sloped at approximately 45 degrees or less if the soils are dry or loose



Stepped when soils are wet

All spoils need to be a minimum of 2 feet from the pit edge.



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Environmental Health Program

155 North First Avenue, MS 5, Suite 170, Hillsboro, OR 97124

Telephone: (503) 846-8722 Fax: (503) 846-3705 WashCoSeptic.com