



## SITE EVALUATION FOR A SEPTIC SYSTEM PROCEDURE & CRITERIA

### **Where is a Septic System Needed?**

A septic system is needed in areas where no sewer service is available. An onsite sewage treatment and disposal system, also known as a septic system, treats and properly disposes of sewage including gray water.

### **What is a Site Evaluation?**

A site evaluation determines which type and size of system is suitable for the property. Before applying for a permit to install a septic system, a Washington County Environmental Health Specialist must perform a site evaluation.

### **Site Evaluation Criteria**

The suitability of a proposed septic system site is largely determined by the type and depth of soil and the depth of the water table. Other factors include the property size, site steepness, availability of sewer service, and the location of the system relative to streams, wells, cuts, and fills. Also, there must be enough area available for a full system replacement in case the system fails. These criteria are prescribed in Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) Chapter 304, Division 071 and 073. Obtain a copy of the rules from DEQ's Onsite website: [www.oregon.gov/DEQ/](http://www.oregon.gov/DEQ/).

### **Site Evaluation Process**

**Step 1:** Complete the application, include the owner or legally authorized representative's signature, and submit it to Washington County's Environmental Health Program office with the required fees. Include a tax lot map, a detailed drawing of the proposed development, and directions to the property. Provide a minimum of two test pits (more are necessary for large systems) at least 75 feet apart in the proposed drainfield area. See the "Test Pit Preparation for

Onsite Sewage Evaluation" for specific requirements.

**Step 2:** After the Washington County Environmental Health Program receives a completed application, an Environmental Health Specialist will visit the property to perform the site evaluation. Depending on the weather, more than one visit may be necessary for test pit placement or if additional test pits need to be dug. Washington County's goal is to respond to completed site evaluation applications within one to three weeks of receiving them.

**Step 3:** A Site Evaluation Report will specify the approved area, requirements for the type and size of the septic system, and any other special requirements. If the site is rejected, provide additional tests pits for evaluation within 90 days of rejection (there are no additional fees). The Site Evaluation Report provides information regarding how to apply for a Site Evaluation Report Review (conducted by DEQ personnel), and provides an opportunity to apply for a standards variance.

A favorable Site Evaluation Report is needed in order to apply for the permit. Obtain permit application packets from Washington County's Environmental Health Program office or from the website: [www.co.washington.or.us](http://www.co.washington.or.us). The fee schedule is available online and in the office.