



## ALTERATION PERMIT 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.

### **Why are Permits Required?**

Permits are required to ensure septic systems are sited and constructed so that human health and the environment are protected.

### **What is an Alteration Permit?**

An *Alteration Construction Installation Permit* is authorization to alter an existing septic system for a single family dwelling or a system that has a projected sewage flow of less than 2,500 gallons per day. Alteration permits are required when additions to existing structures, replacement of existing dwellings, or the construction of an auxiliary structure either covers portions of the existing septic system (or replacement area) and/or exceed the design capacity of the system. Obtain an alteration permit application packet from the Washington County's Environmental Health Program office or from the county's website: [www.co.washington.or.us](http://www.co.washington.or.us).

There are minor and major alteration permits. Minor alteration permits are for changes that do not involve the drainfield of the system. Major alteration permits are for the expansion of an existing system that involves the drainfield or adding a treatment unit such as a sand filter. Permits are valid for one year but for an additional fee may be renewed or reinstated if construction and installation takes longer to complete.

Major alterations, for increases in flow over 300 gallons per day or greater than 50% of the system capacity, must be treated in the same manner as a new septic system. This includes the requirement for the completion of a favorable site evaluation prior to obtaining a permit. For more information, see the "Site Evaluation Permit for a Septic System Procedure and Criteria" fact sheet.

### **What are the Permit Fees?**

Permit fees are different for minor and major alteration permits. Fees are determined by what needs to be altered, the type of system, and the amount of sewage flow. Contact the Washington County Environmental Health Program for the fee schedule or to obtain specific information for a particular application.

### **Permit Criteria**

The suitability of a proposed alteration of an existing septic system is largely determined by the type and depth of soil and the depth to the water table. Other factors include the property size, site steepness, availability of sewer service, and location of the system relative to streams, wells, cuts, and fills. In most cases, 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 the DEQ's Onsite website: [www.oregon.gov/DEQ/](http://www.oregon.gov/DEQ/).

## **Permit Process**

**Step One:** Complete the application, include the owner or legally authorized representative's signature, and submit it to the Washington County Environmental Health Program with the required fees.

If the drainfield will be altered, provide at least one test pit (more are necessary for large systems) in the proposed drainfield area. The specific requirements for test pits are provided in the "Test Pit Preparation for Onsite Sewage Evaluations Form. Attach the following documents:

- a) A Land Use Compatibility Statement (LUCS) signed by Washington County Department of Land Use and Transportation
- b) Detailed plans and specifications for the proposed alteration of the system; property owner or a DEQ licensed installer must draw plans for a construction installation permitted system
- c) A detailed Site Development Plan and directions to the property
- d) A vicinity/locator map

**Step Two:** A Pre-cover Inspection (before it is covered with soil) of the repair is required unless waived by Washington County Environmental Health Program. Some complex systems, such as sand filters, 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 complete the Final Inspection Request and Notice Form submit it to this office. This form must be signed by the installer certifying it was installed according to DEQ specifications. Within seven days of receipt of this completed form, the Environmental Health Program will either waive or conduct the inspection.

**Step Three:** After completion of a satisfactory inspection, cover the installation. A Certificate of Satisfactory Completion will either be left onsite or mailed after a satisfactory inspection is complete; it is then permitted to use the septic system.

For more information, contact the Washington County Environmental Health Program at (503) 846-8722, DEQ at (503) 229-5696, or visit DEQ's website: [www.oregon.gov/DEQ/](http://www.oregon.gov/DEQ/).