

Frequently Asked Questions

I want to build a house on my property. What is the first step that I need to take?

- If the property currently does not have a platted area designated for sewage disposal, referred to as a SRA or sewage system reserve area, the property will have to be evaluated to ensure that the soil will support sewage disposal.
- An application for land evaluation (LE) is required to be filed with Environmental Health.
The application can be found at www.wicomicohealth.org Land Evaluation
- The property will be evaluated based on the following factors: size of property, soil types, water table levels, percolation test rate, and surrounding environmental impact factors.
- Once the evaluation is completed, a letter detailing the next steps that must be taken will be sent to the property owner or representative.

Do I have to wait for the wet season to have a land evaluation conducted on my property?

- There are areas in Wicomico County that can be tested throughout the year.
- Some areas which have historically high water table levels require testing in the “wet” season. The “wet” season is that period of time when the water table is at its highest or near highest level. Generally, the months of November through the end of March the water levels are at the highest level. However, this can vary from year to year.
- Contact the Division of Environmental Health for an update on “wet” season testing at 410-546-4446.

Do I need a building permit from the Health Department?

- Yes. Once the sewage system reserve area has been approved and it is desired to move forward with building on the property, a Building Permit will be required.
- The Building Permit application can be found at www.wicomicohealth.org

I want to build a pool, garage, pole barn or other structure on my property, do I need a permit from the Health Department?

- Yes. It is very important that the new structure is not placed in the existing SRA.
- A review must be conducted to ensure that there is sufficient area for a septic system repair.
- If the existing SRA is proposed to be impacted, a new area equal to the disturbed area must be identified to ensure that, if necessary, a future system repair can be done.
- Application for Building Permit can be found at www.wicomicohealth.org

My current sewage disposal system is failing. What do I need to do to have it repaired?

- The first step is to file an application for the Replacement Sewage System. The application can be found at www.wicomicohealth.org
- A representative of Environmental Health will conduct an evaluation of the area available for a sewage disposal on the property. A design will be based on the following factors: size of area available for repair, soil type, percolation test results, water table levels, and other environmental factors.
- Once completed, a permit will be issued detailing the sewage disposal system design and layout.
- The sewage disposal system must be installed by a Wicomico County Health Department licensed installer. Several inspections will be conducted during the construction.
- Once construction is completed, a final inspection certificate will be issued.

When submitting an application for the construction of a sewage disposal system, do I need a site plan?

- Yes, a site plan is required as part of the application process.
- Included on the site plan the following information must be provided:
 - Location of house and any other structures on the property
 - Location of wells on the property.
 - Location of wells within 100' of the property line.
 - Location of existing septic tank and drainfield
- Additionally, name of the contractor who will be doing the installation.
- If a repair, provide a copy of an inspection report if it is available.

I'm a Homeowner with a Septic System - What Should I Know?

Septic systems can be an efficient and cost-effective way to safely treat and dispose of household waste, but they require the care and diligence of the homeowner.

Homeowners can help prolong the life of the system by following these recommended operation and maintenance practices: Solids will accumulate in the septic tank over time. **Tank pumping is recommended every three to five years;**

- To conserve water, use it efficiently, fix leaks, and use water-saving appliances;
- Do not dispose of chemicals down the drain.
- Check with your local waste disposal agency for recycling hazardous chemicals;
- Avoid using garbage disposals and do not pour fats, oils and grease down the drain;
- Do not drive vehicles or machinery over the drainage component; mowing is okay;
- Plant grass but not trees or shrubs in the drainfield, since the roots may damage the septic system;
- Do not build, pave or add fill over any area of the septic system;
- Flush only toilet paper – no wipes, feminine hygiene products, etc.;
- Ensure stormwater runs away from tank and drainfield;
- Ensure power to the system if it utilizes a pump, or an advanced treatment unit