



Sewage Operation and Maintenance Program

A statewide sewage code that superseded local county sewage regulations went into effect on January 1, 2015. All health districts are now required to develop sewage Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Programs to assess the operating conditions of all private sewage systems within their jurisdictions. The Logan County Health District (LCHD) is in the process of implementing an O&M program for Logan County.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has begun conducting surveys of local health districts to determine the extent of their compliance with the new code's requirements. The state does allow for some variation for each county to accomplish ODH's stated goal of preventing pollution to the environment by repairing or replacing failed sewage systems. All existing home sewage treatment systems (HSTS) are required to have renewable operation permits. Operation permits are in addition to the original installation permits. The sewage code gives a maximum limit for the length of time that an operation permit is valid, but health districts can vary renewal times based on the type of sewage system. Sewage systems that are not creating public health nuisances will not be required to be improved, except for having risers on septic tanks, distribution boxes and any tiles carrying waste water off of the property, since these items aid in maintenance and monitoring. An Ohio EPA sewage grant program is available to help pay for the costs of correcting failed sewage systems, including connecting to sanitary sewer. An application and poverty guideline charts are posted on the LCHD website (loganhealth.org).

The Environmental Health Division is continuing with the input received to date from stakeholders to develop the assessment process and a timeline for phasing in O&M management for all existing private sewage systems. A three-tiered division of renewable operation permits has been adopted according to the risk factors of system age, complexity due to mechanical components and risks to public health. During the assessment phase of the O&M Program, as many sewage systems as possible will be matched to their health district-issued installation permit using information provided. A site inspection and septic tank pumping will not be necessary until after the operation permit has been issued. Holding tank and tanks that have less than one-half of their liquid capacity remaining will be required to be pumped out at the time of their inspection in order to renew the operation permit. Annual operation permits will be required for each system that utilizes mechanical components such as pumps and blowers, consist of only a holding tank or are of an unknown or unpermitted construction. Operation permits with five (5) year limits will be required for systems that utilize off-lot discharging of wastewater (clear water curtain drains are exempt). This keeps timeframes in line with the five (5) year time limit mandated in the required National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits already enforced by the Ohio EPA for all wastewater discharged to the waters of the state. All other systems that treat wastewater on lot will have the maximum allowable ten (10) year renewal period.

Operation permits of sewage systems installed after the adoption of the new state sewage code (January 1, 2015) will be honored until their expiration dates. Failure to pay the \$50 operation permit fee will result in a 25% late penalty fee, with all fees eventually being assessed to the property owner's taxes.