



## **Sewage Operation and Maintenance Program**

A statewide sewage code that superseded local county sewage regulations went into effect on January 1, 2015. Health districts have been required to develop a sewage Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Program 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 and expects to survey every county within three years. 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. The sewage code gives a maximum limit for the length of an operation permit 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.

An OEPA sewage grant program is available to help pay for the costs of correcting failed sewage systems. The present sewage grant application states that sewer line connections and repairs also now qualify for assistance. The associated poverty guideline charts have also been posted on the LCHD website ([loganhealth.org](http://loganhealth.org)). The Environmental Health Division is continuing with the input received to date from stakeholders to develop a timeline and process for phasing in O&M management for all prior installed home sewage systems according to the risk factors of system age, complexity due to mechanical components and risks to public health.

A three-tiered division of renewable operation permits is being considered for each sewage system in the county. Annual operation permits will be required for each system that utilizes mechanical components such as pumps and blowers. 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 OEPA 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.

Following three readings of the revised Logan County Regulation 26, operation permit applications would begin to be mailed after January 1, 2019, to all owners of sewage systems installed prior to January 1, 2015. The operation permits of systems installed after the adoption of the new state sewage code will be honored until their expiration dates. Failure to pay the \$50 operation permit will result in a 25% penalty fee and could eventually be assessed to the property owner's taxes.