



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

GUADALUPE COUNTY

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ON-SITE SEWAGE FACILITY PERMIT PROCESS

Before building, altering, extending or operating an on-site sewage facility, a person must have an authorization to construct an on-site sewage facility issued by the Guadalupe County Environmental Health Department.

The permitting process is comprised of nine steps that need to be followed when installing an on-site system. These steps are a safeguard to ensure that the property owner receives a quality product.

- **STEP 1: EVALUATE SITE AND SOIL**

A registered sanitarian or site evaluator must conduct a site and soil evaluation. This person prepares a report on the soil conditions and site survey, and locates structures on the property that have specified separation distances from on-site systems.

- **STEP 2: CHOOSE A SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEM**

The choice of an OSSF system is based on the site and soil conditions found during the evaluation. Choosing the appropriate technology is critical to the system's success.

Each on-site sewage system consists of a treatment component, which initially treats the wastewater, and a land application component, which distributes the wastewater to the soil. To determine possible land application options, compare the key conditions of the site and soil to the requirements for the various systems.

The type of land application system you choose determines what kind of treatment system can be used. To obtain approval for the system you have chosen, you must contact a designated representative or TCEQ regional office. Examples of treatment options include septic tanks, aerobic treatment units, sand filters, trickling filters and constructed wetlands. The treatment system chosen depends on the water quality requirements of the land application system, which is chosen to accommodate the site and soil conditions. Final selection of the system components should be completed in cooperation with the professional designer.

- **STEP 3: DEVELOP A SYSTEM PLAN**

The system must be planned by a person authorized by the permitting authority under current regulation. Installers can normally plan standard or conventional systems, including gravel-filled standard drainfields, unlined evapotranspiration beds, gravel less pipe and leaching chambers. Systems that are more complex - including surface application, low-pressure dosing, mounds and non-standard systems - require professionally developed planning materials.

A professional designer is either a registered professional engineer (PE) or a registered sanitarian (RS) licensed to practice in Texas with experience in designing on-site wastewater systems.

- **STEP 4: SUBMIT APPLICATION AND PLANNING MATERIALS**

A permit application and planning materials must be prepared and submitted in the property owner's name and on a form provided by the permitting authority.

- **STEP 5: REVIEW OF APPLICATION AND MATERIALS**

The permitting authority reviews the application, site and soil evaluation, the type and size of the system selected, and other supporting documents required for a permit to be issued. The review ensures that rules in the jurisdiction are followed and that good engineering practices are used. The County Septic Inspector may visit the site to verify the application accuracy and completeness.

- **STEP 6: AUTHORIZATION TO CONSTRUCT**

An authorization to construct an on-site sewage facility must be issued by the permitting authority before building can begin. An authorization to construct may be withheld for, included, but not limited to, the following reasons:

- Information missing, omitted, or contradictory on the application as required in Chapter A 285.5 285.30 of TCEQ Rules for onsite sewage facilities
- A Floodplain Development Permit not being issued
- Noncompliance with the Guadalupe County Subdivision Regulations

- **STEP 7: CONSTRUCT SYSTEM**

Licensed installers or their apprentices can begin building the system only after receiving the authorization to construct. The system must be built according to the approved plans and permit application. Any changes to the system must be approved by the permitting authority before the changes are made.

In some cases, a new review will be needed, such as when site conditions are different from those submitted in the planning materials. The level of certification (Installer I or II) required for construction depends on the type of system.

- **STEP 8: SYSTEM INSPECTION**

The inspection should be based on the approved application and plans, current regulations, and accepted engineering practices.

The system must be inspected by the permitting authority at the appropriate stages of construction according to the type of system being installed. Inspections must be scheduled in advance and according to local policies. They should be comprehensive, covering all parts of the system.

This office must be notified as least 24 hours before an inspection is needed. If the system fails or is not ready to be inspected when the designated representative arrives, the installer is responsible for a \$100.00 reinspection fee. The reinspection fee must be paid in full before another inspection is scheduled. These requirements also apply to on-site sewage facilities in need of alteration or repair.

- **STEP 9: NOTICE OF LICENSE TO OPERATE**

A license to operate is issued by the permitting authority after the completed system has passed all inspections. A license to operate is required before a facility is put into use.