SNOHOMISH HEALTH DISTRICT

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION
Water & Wastewater Section
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Health Lifestyles, Healthy Communities

Subject: **Reduced Size Soil Absorption Systems**

Effective: May 17, 1999

Supersedes: Sand Filter Systems April 11, 1997

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Approved by: _____ Robert A. Pekich, Director Environmental Health Division

Philosophy

The Washington State Department of Health (DOH) Recommended Standards and Guidance documents set forth standards for the design, installation, operation and maintenance of alternative onsite sewage disposal systems. While the guidelines provide a comprehensive set of general standards regarding alternative systems they lack standards and operating procedures which take into consideration local conditions and concerns. Of particular concern is the lack of state and local performance data on reduced sized soil absorption systems, which use soil loading rates in excess of those required in WAC 246-272-11501(2)(k), herein referred to as a reduced size soil absorption system.

Purpose

To allow limited use of onsite sewage disposal systems which utilize soil loading rates in excess of the rates specified in WAC 246-272-11501(2)(k), in order to gather information and data relative to their performance in Snohomish County, and to develop a process to assure compliance with DOH operation and maintenance requirements together with a mechanism for funding Snohomish Health District (SHD) supervision of data collection and management. The SHD will review and evaluate this Policy, and the use of reduced size soil absorption systems after receiving performance data from a significant representation of local installations and may make appropriate modifications to this Policy as a result.

Procedure

The following procedure sets forth conditions under which the SHD will allow reduced size soil absorption systems.

A. The parcel must be an existing legal lot of record.

B. The onsite sewage disposal system shall be located within the property line boundaries of the lot containing the structure to be served.

C. This option cannot be used in combination with any other drainfield size reductions as may be provided for in the Guidelines or Health District Sanitary Code.

D. This option cannot be used in combination with Health District policy regarding redundant drainfields.

E. All design, installation and monitoring requirements as set forth in the applicable DOH Guideline and this Policy shall be followed.

F. When trenches are used they shall be appropriate for the site, shall not exceed three feet in width, and shall be separated by a minimum of six feet of original undisturbed soil between sidewalls.

G. The onsite sewage disposal system application shall include a *Declaration of Covenant* which describes the system type, addresses service agreement requirements, operation and maintenance requirements, reporting requirements, emergency response procedures, and special conditions and agreements. The covenant shall describe and acknowledge any special conditions for approval of a reduced size soil absorption system using increased soil loading rates as outlined in the DOH Guideline and this Policy, including but not limited to the following:

1. Owner's understanding and acknowledgment that the onsite sewage disposal system is designed and approved in accordance with the applicable Department of Health Guideline and SHD Policy.

2. Owner's understanding of their responsibility and obligation to assure proper operation and maintenance of their system and to provide performance monitoring inspection reports to the SHD. Performance monitoring inspections must be conducted by a certified onsite sewage system designer or professional engineer two times per year (once every six months) during the first and second year following installation of the system and annually thereafter and in response to complaints or problems. Inspection reports shall be submitted to the SHD upon completion.

3. Monitoring is to be in accordance with the inspection/monitoring criteria established in the applicable guideline issued by the Washington State Department of Health and shall also include requirements contained in the Snohomish Health District Sanitary Code and Policies regarding the use of reduced sized soil absorption systems.

4. Upon request for release of Health District installation permit, Owner agrees to provide SHD a copy of a service contract with a certified onsite sewage system designer or professional engineer to conduct a sewage system operation inspection and conduct (or coordinate) preventative maintenance every six months for the first two years after the system is installed, approved and operational. Contract to set forth minimum inspection report data to include water use figures, effluent dose volumes and frequencies, observed and measured ponding in trenches after dose, etc.

5. Upon request for release of Health District installation permit, Owner agrees to pay fees to the Snohomish Health District which will cover costs the District will incur for operation and maintenance records management for a minimum two year period; such fee established in the Snohomish Health District Fee schedule.

6. It is the Owner's obligation to immediately report any failure, damage, or change of conditions relating to the onsite sewage disposal system to the Snohomish Health District.

7. It is the Owner's agreement to not cause any part of the system to become non-functional or ineffective.

8. It is the Owner's agreement to grant the Snohomish Health District the right to enter the property during normal business hours for purposes of routine inspections for onsite sewage disposal system monitoring and enforcement of the Sanitary Code and this Policy.

H. Prior to issuance of the onsite sewage disposal system installation permit the following shall be provide to the SHD:

1. A copy of the recorded operation and maintenance covenant.

2. A copy of an operation and maintenance service agreement with a certified designer or professional engineer.

3. Payment of SHD operation and maintenance records management fee for a minimum two year period.