



What is this guide for?

Use this guide to learn about the steps to getting your on-site sewage system (OSS) installed and permitted! We are here to make sure your septic system is installed as shown on your approved OSS design and according to [Washington State regulations](#) and [Snohomish County Board of Health Code](#) for on-site wastewater treatment. If you ever have a question, please call us at **(425) 339-5250** or email SHD-EHQ@snoco.org.

Note: Snohomish County Health Department (SCHD) makes no representations/determinations as to full compliance with other land use/disturbance regulations including, but not limited to, the Indian Graves and Records Act (Chapter 27.44 RCW), the Archeological Resources Protection Act (Chapter 27.53 RCW), or the necessity for compliance with any other regulations.

Permitting & installation steps

First, you'll want to review the important points below and keep them in mind as you go through the process:

Your application and design approval is NOT a permit: Your permit will be issued later after other steps are taken.

Leave the soil alone: Do not disturb the soil on your property in the designated drainfield and reserve areas.

Notify of any changes: Your approval was based on the location of existing and proposed structures as shown on the approved design. If you have made any changes to the existing or proposed structures since your design was approved, be sure to contact your designer! All revisions are subject to review and approval by the Health Department. You may need to pay an additional fee for review of the revision, when applicable.

Financial assistance: SCHD offers grants to qualifying homeowners with failing septic systems through the Savvy Septic program. Grants can be used for design and installation costs, but cannot be used as reimbursement for work you've already paid for. Visit <https://www.snohd.org/718/Grants> for more info. If you don't qualify for a Savvy Septic grant, you may be eligible for a Clean Water Loan through the non-profit lender Craft3. Visit www.Craft3.org for more info.

With those points in mind, below are steps for the permitting and installation process. Depending on your property and what you want to do, there may be more requirements with other regulatory agencies such as the Department of [Planning & Development Services \(PDS\)](#) in addition to what the Health Department requires.

Step 1: Contact a designer or professional engineer

Reach out to a septic designer or professional engineer, as you'll need to hire one to do some of the work in the next steps that must be done by a designer (such as requesting a permit from the Health Department, reviewing the installer's work, and creating an as-built drawing). This can be the same professional you hired for the application and design phase or a different one.

I hired a designer for the permit and installation phase



Step 2: Complete any permit requirements that apply to you

Before you hire an installer, it's a good idea to complete all of your permit requirements. Depending on your situation, you may need to complete all, some, or none of the items listed below. Before the Health Department can issue a permit for installation, they will check to make sure any requirements for your situation have been met. **Please see the list of items below that may be required before a permit is issued.**

Permit Fee

This applies to: New systems. There is **no** permit fee for OSS repairs & alterations.

To complete this requirement: Pay the fee. Fees can be found on our [online fee schedule](#) – select the *Septic, Water, Land Use* category and see the fees under *Permit for On-Site Sewage Dispersal System*. Payments can be made online through our [payment portal](#) – Select the *On-Site Sewage* tab, then select *Permit Payment*.

This applies to me, and I completed this requirement (or not applicable)

Declaration of Covenant & Monitoring and Maintenance Agreement

This applies to: All system types except for gravity and pressure distribution systems. An example of a Declaration of Covenant will have been sent with your application approval if it applies to your system type.

To complete this requirement: Declaration of Covenant is just a fancy way of saying you'll need to sign a document stating you'll follow certain requirements after install. Use the steps below for this requirement:

1. Sign a declaration of covenant **and** have it notarized. Most designers will assist with this step, but if not please reach out to us!
2. Submit the declaration of covenant to the county [Recording Office](#) along with their required recording fee. Unsure what your fee will be? Give the Recording Office a call at (425) 388-3483.
3. Find a service provider and sign a two-year monitoring & maintenance agreement with them saying you will have your system inspected at the frequency stated in the declaration of covenant. A [list of certified monitoring & maintenance providers](#) is available online.
4. Submit the notarized and recorded declaration of covenant along with the maintenance agreement to the Health Department. You can email these to SHD-EHQ@snoco.org

This applies to me, and I completed these requirements (or not applicable)

Drinking Water Requirements

This applies to: For those seeking a building permit, [Planning & Development Services \(PDS\)](#) will determine if this applies to your situation. Your proposed source of drinking water may be subject to Health Department requirements and building permit requirements of RCW 19.27.097.

To complete this requirement: See attached [Growth Management Act](#) info for details. Until these requirements are met, an OSS or building permit will not be issued.

This applies to me, and I completed this requirement (or not applicable)



Building Permit Requirements

This applies to: Those seeking a building permit.

To complete this requirement: Meet any requirements for building permits required by the Department of [Planning & Development Services \(PDS\)](#). Contact PDS for details. An OSS permit will **not** be issued before the city/county building permit is issued. The OSS permit that gets issued will be valid so long as the city or county building permit is valid. If the building permit is withdrawn, revoked, or expires, the OSS installation permit will no longer be valid.

- This applies to me, and I completed this requirement (or not applicable)

Step 3: Hire a certified installer

Only those certified as an OSS installer with Snohomish County can install your septic system. You can find certified installers on our [list of OSS contractors](#) available online. We recommend getting multiple quotes to find a fair price. One exception to hiring certified installers is for gravity-only systems – homeowners can act as the installer for this type of system only. If you plan to install your own gravity system, contact us for more details.

Sometimes a pre-construction meeting is required at the Health Department’s discretion for properties that have more complex site conditions. The designer or installer may also request this meeting. Property owners are not required to attend these meetings, but just know that at some point the installer, designer, and a Health Department representative may need to meet at your property to go over any concerns and clarify details together before the permit is issued.

- I hired a certified installer
 If required, a pre-construction meeting has occurred

Step 4: Installing the system

Once the fee is paid and any other requirements have been met, the permit will be issued and the installer is allowed to install the system. Make sure they have the permit before they start any work! Coordinate an installation date with the installer. Keep in mind installation may be subject to dry weather and dry soil conditions, and some installs may take more than one day. The permit should be placed in a very visible location on your property by the installer. Once the installer is done, they will notify the designer that the job is complete.

- The system has been installed on my property

Step 5: Final inspection & as-built record

Now that the system is in the ground, it will remain uncovered until it can be inspected by both the designer and the Health Department. First, the designer will go out to the property to review the installer’s work. For any systems that use a pump, the designer and installer will test the system together to make sure it functions properly (a Health Department representative may or may not be present for these tests). If the system was installed



according to the approved design and any tests go smoothly, the designer signs the permit and notifies the Health Department for final inspection. They do this by submitting an as-built (record drawing) of your system.

Next, a Health Department representative will visit your property to do a final inspection and make sure the as-built is accurate. If all looks good, the permit will be signed and they will give final approval to the installer to cover it. Keep the signed permit for your records! If there are issues with the installation or as-built, the Health Department will send a letter to you, the designer, and the installer listing what needs to be corrected before the permit is signed.

Finally, the installer will backfill/cover the system once it has been approved, and then you can start using your septic system! Now that your system is approved, the Health Department will send you a copy of the accepted as-built record, as well as info about how to care for your septic system and make sure your investment lasts.

- My system has been approved, and the Health Department has sent me the accepted as-built record.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I know when the Health Department will visit my property to conduct a final inspection?

Environmental Health Specialists from the Health Department can enter your property for the purposes of conducting a final inspection at any time per Snohomish County Board of Health Code (SCBHC) 1.05.080. They will knock to see if someone is home, notify you of their presence and reason for visiting, and request access to your property. However, if no one is home they will still proceed with their inspection.

How do I appeal a decision made by the Health Department?

To appeal application decisions, please refer to [chapter 1.20 Snohomish County Board of Health Code \(SCBHC\)](#). An administrative appeal must be filed in writing with the Environmental Health Division Office within twenty-one (21) calendar days from the date of your application decision.

Download, complete, and save the [“Request for Appeal”](#) form to your computer/device. Send an email, attaching your completed Appeal Request and supporting documents, to SHD-EHQ@snoco.org.