



**PUBLIC HEALTH AND
SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

MEMORANDUM

January 1, 2009

Sherri McDonald, RN, MPA,
Director
Diana T. Yu, MD, MSPH
Health Officer

TO: TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN
FROM: Pumper Program
SUBJECT: Pumper and Pumper Firm Performance Expectations

The following is a clarification of Article IV, Section 23.3 of the Thurston County Sanitary Code and Thurston County Pumpers' Manual governing sewage disposal, and a summary of departmental performance expectations that apply to Pumpers and Pumper Firms. Satisfactory performance shall be assessed against how consistently the Pumper or Pumper Firm meets these expectations:

Conditions of Certification in Thurston County

- Pumper Firms must meet zoning and planning regulations of the municipality or county where the trucks will be parked or dispatched.
- For new Pumpers, initial application to pump in Thurston County can be submitted at any time during the year. An application with the Pumper Firm's business name; business location, mailing address and phone number; truck license numbers and **dispatch** location, and a list of those employed by the firm and proof of certification must be submitted to Thurston County Environmental Health (TCEH).
- Renewal of Pumper certification requires that renewal application and fee be submitted to the department by December 31. Late fees and loss of certification apply after this date.
- Addition or replacement of pumper trucks or employees must be reported to TCEH as soon as possible.
- All pumper trucks (including trucks used for pumping portable toilets) operating in Thurston County and all septage storage facilities within the County will be visually inspected every third year.
- Pumper Firms must be licensed and bonded contractors as required by the State of Washington Department of Licensing.

Authorization

- Pumpers and Pumper Firms are authorized to repair only the items listed in Article IV or other enabling documents such as the Thurston County Pumper's Manual.
- Before repairing rusting metal tanks or baffles, contact TCEH staff who will determine whether the tank can be repaired or needs to be replaced. It should be noted that most tanks will require replacement (septic tank placement permit required).
- Pumpers and Pumper Firms **are not** authorized to repair drain fields or mounds **except** for replacement of short sections of pipe (2 feet or less) which have been damaged while locating the tank, or damaged during de-rooting or flushing of clogged gravity lines.

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- Pumpers and Pumper Firms are authorized to do the inspections required for renewal of the operational certificate for the following types of systems: 1) standard gravity, 2) pump-to-gravity, 3) standard pressure distribution, 4) mound, and 5) proprietary Glendon systems.
- For sand filter systems, **only Pumpers who have completed sand filter operation and maintenance training are authorized to inspect sand filter systems.** Otherwise the inspection must be performed by licensed designers/engineers, or department-certified installers or certified monitoring specialists. Please call **Washington On-Site Sewage Association (WOSSA)** at www.wossa.org/classes.html or by phone at (253) 770-6594 to schedule a class. You may contact another organization if you desire provided that it relates to operation and maintenance of sand filters.

Requirement for Proof of Continuing Education Units

- To maintain certification, all Pumpers must attend related continuing educational classes every two years and give proof of attendance to their employer.
- Each Pumper Firm must submit copies of any certificates showing that **required** continuing educational classes have been attended and passed by each pumper employed by the firm.
- A list of available classes can be obtained by contacting Washington On-Site Sewage Association at www.wossa.org/classes.html.

Pumping Procedures

- Tanks must be pumped through manhole lids, **NOT** baffle inspection ports, to prevent damage.
- **Both** compartments of the septic tank must be pumped when done for routine maintenance or as part of a county permit review, health letter, or operational certificate renewal.
- Both compartments of a two-compartment tank must be pumped, even if only one has too much sludge or scum.
- Pump tanks must be pumped if there is sludge accumulation.
- On systems where effluent filters are present, clean the effluent filter when inspecting or pumping the septic tank. A washdown hose with a vacuum breaker (anti-siphon) connector must be purchased and carried on the truck for cleaning the filters.
- Septic tank inlet and outlet lids and pump tanks must be left exposed if a TCEH inspection is required.
- Please note that all references in the Pumpers' Manual to the scum and sludge measurements for when to pump a septic tank are out of date. The brochure **Inspecting Your Septic Tank: It's not so bad...really!** describes the new criteria to determine when to pump a septic tank. This new criteria must be used when doing "stick tests" to determine if pumping is needed.

Septic Tank Pump and Service Report Forms

- The triplicate **Septic Tank Pump and Service Report** form must be used for **all** pumping, inspection or service calls involving septic systems in Thurston County. If you are not sure if a tank feeds into a sewer or septic system, use this form.
- As noted on the triplicate pumper report form, one copy of the form must be given to the owner, one to the TCEH and one copy kept by the Pumper Firm. The white copy of all pumper report forms must be **submitted to TCEH by the 10th of the following month.**
- **All** items or inspections listed on the pumper report form must be completed. This includes reporting any signs of surfacing sewage, wetness in drain field area or sewage backup in crawl spaces or plumbing.
- As of January 1, 2008, the **Monthly Pumper Records** will no longer be required to be submitted to TCEH. Instead, copies of the monthly pumper record forms must be maintained at the Pumper Firm for a period of three years and be made available for inspection upon request by the Health Officer.

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- Blank daily septic tank pump and service report forms will be supplied free to Pumpers and Pumper Firms and can be picked up at the PAC, 2nd floor of the Courthouse, Building 1, 2000 Lakeridge Drive SW. You can also request they be mailed to you by calling TCEH at 360-754-3355 extension 6518.

Special Henderson Watershed Protection Area (HWPA) Requirements / Expectations

- All On-Site Sewage Systems (OSS's) in HWPA are required to have renewable Operational Certificates and be inspected at least every three years.
- A site specific **Henderson OSS inspection** form, sent to the owner by the department at the time of Operational Certificate renewal, must be completely filled out and returned. If the tank was pumped, a triplicate Septic Tank Pump and Service Report form must also be completed, with a copy given to the owner and a copy sent to TCEH. The owner is still responsible for submitting a copy to TCEH, regardless of whether the Pumper Firm sends in a copy of their report.
- Inspections require stick testing and/or pumping of septic tanks, pump chambers, and other devices when needed; and inspecting all components of the OSS.
- Whether the septic tank is pumped or not, the effluent filter (if equipped) will be removed, cleaned and reinstalled at the time of inspection.
- All recommendations for maintenance and repairs will be in writing to the homeowner, operator or person in charge. All repair work performed will be documented on the Henderson OSS inspection form.
- Go to Thurston County's Geodata website at www.geodata.org to check specific properties for inclusion in the HWPA program.

Questions regarding codes governing sewage disposal or Pumper and Pumper Firm performance expectations in Thurston County should be directed to the Pumper Program at (360) 754-4111.