

Operation & Maintenance Program for Household Sewage Treatment Systems

The Operation & Maintenance (O&M) Program was designed to protect water resources essential to the health of Trumbull County residents by eliminating pollution and the spread of disease caused by sewage. The program is crucial to assuring that septic systems are functioning properly. All septic systems inspected by the Trumbull County Health Department, whether for real estate inspections, sewage nuisance complaints, or additions, are eventually placed on the O&M Program.

The O&M Program requires an owner of a household sewage treatment system to obtain and Operation & Maintenance Permit annually. Depending on the level of the O&M program (2 – 5) have their system under a service contract with a registered service provider, have the system pumped as required, and allow for annual inspection and/or effluent sampling by the health department sanitarians. **A properly functioning septic system adds longevity to the system.**

The health department sanitarians educate all interested homeowners in the proper use and operation of their septic system. Many homeowners appreciate this since there is misinformation from uninformed sources being circulated.

Level 2 systems are on-lot septic systems with some mechanical components. A visual inspection of the trash trap, aerator and splitter box is conducted and an effluent sample is obtained for a BOD/TSS (bio-oxygen demand & total suspended solids) test.

Level 3 systems are older off-lot septic systems and are completely mechanical. The visual inspection includes inspecting the trash trap, aerator, dosing tank and sand filter (if applicable), chlorinator, dechlorinator and ultraviolet system. A sample is obtained for CBOD/TSS, ammonia and fecal coliform testing.

Level 4 systems are newer off-lot septic systems and are completely mechanical that require an NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit from the EPA. The visual inspection includes inspecting the trash trap, aerator, dosing tank, sand filter, chlorinator and ultraviolet disinfection unit with re-aeration. A sample is obtained for CBOD/TSS, ammonia and fecal coliform testing, with the Dissolved Oxygen test being conducted with the use of D.O. meters.

Level 5 systems are 'temporary fixes' placed on failing septic systems when it has been determined that sanitary sewers are deemed imminent for the area. The inspection of these systems entails visually inspecting the trash trap, aerator (if applicable) and chlorinator and reviewing the files for current tank pumping receipts.

By ensuring that septic systems are performing as designed, the preservation of surface and ground waters are improved. By reducing waterborne diseases, it benefits everyone and makes for a safer environment for all citizens of Trumbull County.