

Frequently Asked Questions

TRANSFER OF LARGE ON-SITE SEWAGE SYSTEMS

(3,500 – 100,000 gallons per day)

From Thurston County Public Health and Social Services

To Washington State Department of Health

August 2011



What is a Large On-Site Sewage System (LOSS)?

"Large on-site sewage system" is a system of components, located on or nearby the property it serves, that

- Treats domestic sewage only.
- Has subsurface treatment and disposal of the effluent, such as through a drainfield.
- Has a design flow between 3,500 and 100,000 gallons per day (gpd).

It does NOT include:

- A holding tank that discharges to a public sewer.
- A system into which stormwater or industrial wastewater is discharged.

Why is this change in who regulates my LOSS happening?

Thurston County Public Health and Social Services (TCPH) and Department of Health (DOH) agreed in 1980 that TCPH would approve, permit and regulate LOSS in Thurston County. However, in 2007, the legislature consolidated the regulation of LOSS under DOH. Since all LOSS are to be permitted by DOH, the agreement has been cancelled, effective in 2011, when we adopted the revised LOSS rule.

When will DOH take over for Thurston County?

LOSS permitted by TCPH will transfer to DOH when their existing TCPH permits expire in 2011. DOH will send permit application information to you.

What does DOH mean by "design flow"?

Design flow means the maximum volume of sewage that residences, structures, or other facilities are estimated to generate in a twenty-four-hour period. Included are both operating capacity and surge capacity for the system during periodic heavy use events.

What changes for my LOSS will I see under DOH regulation?

- Your permit application and permit fees must be sent to DOH each year. DOH permits must be renewed annually.
- You will submit required annual reports and other information to DOH, as required in your permit.
- Projects to build a new LOSS or repair or expand existing LOSS must be designed by a professional engineer and sent to DOH for review and approval.
- DOH must ensure that LOSS protect the environment, as well as public health.

What will not change?

DOH expects owners to maintain and operate their LOSS in a manner that protects public health and the environment, in accordance with regulations.

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How much are DOH annual permit fees?

Annual permit fees are based on the design flow of the LOSS. Annual permit fees for LOSS are \$150 plus \$0.01 per gallon of approved design flow. Fee information is in WAC 246-272-3000, <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=246-272-3000>.

What do I do if I own or operate a LOSS that doesn't have a permit from TCPH or DOH?

You must apply to DOH for a permit. You should expect to provide details of your system's design, performance, and its operation and management. The application is available at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/WW/Loss/WW-LOSS-Q&A.doc>.

Where can I find the DOH LOSS regulation?

Chapter 246-272B WAC (<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=246-272B>) is the LOSS rule. A print-friendly version is available at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/WW/WW-246-272B.pdf>.

For more information please contact:

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The DOH LOSS website is www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/ww/loss/default.htm