



## **Draft On-site Sewage Tank Rule**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **What does this rule provide?**

This rule will provide manufacturers, design engineers, and reviewing agencies with consistent standards in state rules to design, construct, and install sewage tanks. The objective is to achieve effective, long-term sewage treatment and limit discharge of contaminants into Washington waters.

#### **What types of tanks are covered under this rule?**

The definition of sewage tank includes septic tank, pump tank, holding tank, grease interceptor tank, re-circulating filter tank, a tank used with a proprietary product, and any other tank used in an on-site sewage system.

#### **What do manufacturers have to do?**

Manufacturers must make sure all tanks have been approved by DOH and placed on the Sewage Tank Registered List. For tanks not already approved by DOH, manufacturers must apply for approval and registration of the tanks. Manufacturers can't sell tanks that are not on the Sewage Tank Registered List.

#### **What do designers and design engineers have to do?**

When designing sewage tanks, engineers need to follow the requirements in the rule and certify that their designs meet all rule requirements. When designing on-site sewage systems, designers and design engineers can only use sewage tanks from the registered list.

#### **What do state and local health officials have to do under this proposal?**

Health officials must approve the design of every on-site sewage system, make sure the system uses tanks on the registered list, and check to make sure all tanks are watertight after installation.

#### **What do homeowners have to do?**

If local regulations allow homeowners to design and install sewage treatment systems, the homeowner must use a tank from the registered list and must test the sewage tank for watertightness after it is installed.

#### **How does the rule benefit homeowners?**

By ensuring tanks are watertight, the homeowner's on-site sewage system is protected from over loading or damaging the drainfield; their environment is also protected from leaky tanks.

#### **How do manufacturers register tanks?**

Manufacturers must submit an application form that provides all the information requested, along with any applicable fees, to DOH. When DOH approves a tank and all applicable fees are paid, the tank is placed on the Sewage Tank Registered List.

**What do I do with my existing tank inventory?**

If the tank is on the List of Approved Sewage Tanks as of December 31, 2009 you will have until December 31, 2010 to use that tank. After January 1, 2011 only tanks on the Sewage Tanks Registered List can be installed.

**The rule requires tanks to be watertight. What if the tank leaks?**

It is very important to make sure tanks are water tight to protect the environment from leaky tanks and to protect the on-site sewage system from over-loading. If the tank does leak, it must be repaired and re-tested to make sure it is watertight. If a tank cannot be made watertight, it will need to be replaced.

**Why do we have to test each tank after installation?**

Tanks can be damaged during transport or placement. The only way to make sure that every tank is watertight is to test each one after it's installed.

**How are tanks tested? How are they certified as watertight after installation?**

Tanks can be tested by filling them with water or by performing a vacuum test. An authorized witness must complete and submit a certification that the tank is watertight to the appropriate health official.

**How can I comment on the proposed rule? Who do I send comments to?**

You can comment on the rule at one of the workshops. If you can't attend a workshop, you can submit comments in writing, through April 17, 2009, to Melissa McEachron, Dept. of Health, PO Box 47824, Olympia, WA 98504-7824; email [Melissa.McEachron@doh.wa.gov](mailto:Melissa.McEachron@doh.wa.gov).

**What happens after the public workshops?**

DOH will meet with the tank rule advisory panel in May to review public comments and make appropriate changes to the proposed rule. DOH will then develop the significant analysis and other necessary documents to be ready for the public hearing with State Board of Health in October 2009.