

## **On-Site Rule Revision Issue: Connection to Sewer WAC 246-272A-0025**

### **Problem Statement**

WAC 246-272A-0025 requires connection to sewer in several cases, particularly following an OSS failure. This is meant to prevent OSS installations and repairs in areas served by sewer, which are generally more densely populated with more potential for public health impacts from OSS. The language in section 0025 has resulted in uncertainty of its application for LHJs. The interpretation of the term “conforming system” and how the distance between the residence/facility served by the OSS and the sewer is measured appear to be at the root of many of these issues.

### **Options**

- Added clarity to the language in 0025.

### **Pros/Cons**

#### **Pros**

The added clarity should help LHJs, designers, and owners know what is required.

Adds public health protection by clarifying that Table IX repairs are not allowed in these cases.

#### **Cons**

May create some conflict with comprehensive plans.

Changing how the distance is measured may result in less protections (or perceived less protections) for public health by allowing more OSS to be repaired in areas served by sewers.

## Recommendations & Optional Rule Language to Consider

DOH recommends changing section 0025 as follows:    **Blue** = Additions    **Red** = Deletions

### **WAC 246-272A-0025 Connection to public sewer system.**

(1) When adequate public sewer services are available within two hundred feet ~~of the residence or facility~~ or less from where ~~of~~ the existing building drain of the structure connects to the existing building sewer as measured along the usual or most feasible route of access, the local health officer, upon the failure of an existing on-site sewage system may:

(a) Require hook-up to a public sewer system if the sewer utility allows the sewer connection;  
or

(b) Permit the repair or replacement of the on-site sewage system only if a conforming System, not to include systems in compliance with Table IX, can be designed and installed.

~~(2) Except as noted in subsection (1) of this section, the owner of a failure shall abandon the OSS under WAC 246-272A-0300 and connect the residence or other facility to a public sewer system when:~~

~~(a) The distance between the residence or other facility sewer stub out and an adequate public sewer is two hundred feet or less as measured along the usual or most feasible route of access; and~~

~~(b) The sewer utility allows the sewer connection.~~

(3) The owner of a residence or other facility served by a system meeting the requirements of Table IX of this chapter shall abandon the OSS according to the requirements specified in WAC 246-272A-0300, and connect the residence or other facility to a public sewer system when:

(a) Connection is deemed necessary to protect public health by the local health officer;

(b) An adequate public sewer becomes available within two hundred feet of the residence or other facility as measured along the usual or most economically feasible route of access;  
and

(c) The sewer utility allows the sewer connection.

(4) Local boards of health may require a new development to connect to a public sewer system to protect public health.

(5) Local boards of health shall require new development or a development with a failing system to connect to a public sewer system if it is required by the comprehensive land use plan or development regulations.

**“Building Drain”** means that part of the lowest piping of a building’s drainage system that receives the discharge of sewage from pipes inside the walls of the building and conveys it to the building sewer beginning 2 feet outside the building wall.

## Supporting Information

The Uniform Building Code (UBC), Chapter 11, Section 1101 – Sewer Required, requires connection to public sewer if it is available and within 200 feet. This is currently stated in the WAC 246-272A. The 1974 On-Site WAC 248-96-060 also had the same 200 foot distance connection requirement and/or follow the local ordinance.

If you live in an *Urban Growth Area* and your septic system fails or if you plan to expand your home beyond the septic system design capacity, the municipality may have sewer connection requirements as well.

Marine Recovery Area plans developed by the State of Washington may identify the conversion of some septic systems to a public sewer system as a required action to clean up impaired water bodies.

To eliminate the possibility of the effluent from contaminating groundwater/surface water a mandatory OSS elimination program in the *Urban Growth Area* may be instituted. Each property may be required by county code to connect to the sewer and abandon their septic tank within a specified time frame of being notified of the availability of sewer service. Even if the system is not failed.

### Publications

1. [Uniform Building Code](#)
2. HB 5871- pertains to cities and municipalities only

### Excerpt from 2015 Uniform Plumbing Code

**Building Drain** - That part of the lowest piping of a drainage system that receives the discharge from soil, waste, and other drainage pipes inside the walls of the building and conveys it to the building sewer beginning two (2) feet (610 mm) outside the building wall.

**Building Drain (Sanitary)** - A building drain that conveys sewage only.

**Building Drain (Storm)** - A building drain that conveys storm water or other drainage, but no sewage.

**Building Sewer** - That part of the horizontal piping

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of a drainage system that extends from the end of the building drain and that receives the discharge of the building drain and conveys it to a public sewer, private sewer, private sewage disposal system, or other point of disposal.

Building Sewer (Combined) - A building sewer that conveys both sewage and storm water or other drainage.

Building Sewer (Sanitary) - A building sewer that conveys sewage only.

Building Sewer (Storm) - A building sewer that conveys storm water or other drainage, but no sewage.