

PROCEDURES FOR CLEANING AND INSPECTING SEPTIC TANK SYSTEMS

REGISTRATION

1. All septic tank cleaners must have a current permit issued by the Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency (Environmental Health). Each permit is for the current year only and must be renewed prior to the first of each year. An additional late fee will be assessed if renewal is not completed by February 15.
2. A permit will be issued only upon proper application by the business owner/operator on forms provided by Environmental Health (Attachment 1 [EHS 147]), payment of the registration fee, inspection of the pumping equipment, and approval of proposed dumping sites.
3. A valid certificate as to the capacity of the tank must first be secured from the County Sealer of Weights and Measures before a permit will be issued.
4. The permittee and the employees must demonstrate knowledge of the operation of the equipment and must comply with the proper procedures for cleaning and inspecting a septic tank, as set forth in this document and in Chapter 7.42 of the County Code.
5. A permit may be denied, temporarily suspended, or revoked by the Health Officer in the event of violations by the applicant or permittee of the provisions set forth in this document or in Chapter 7.42. Such action may be appealed according to procedures set forth in Section 7.42.310 of Chapter 7.42.
6. A change of address of the septic tank pumper must be reported within ten days by certified mail to Environmental Health Services.

EQUIPMENT

1. The vehicle and pumping equipment must be adequate and kept clean and in good and proper working order.
2. The name and address or phone number of the owner (permittee) shall appear on each side of the truck in letters at least 4 inches high. All lettering is to be permanent.
3. Pumper trucks for septic tank cleaning must have a tank with minimum 1500 gallon capacity. For chemical toilet pumpers, the tank capacity must be at least 500 gallons. The capacity of all tanks, in gallons, must appear on each side of the tank in letters at least 4 inches high. The tank must be watertight and have tight manholes. Discharge valves shall shut tight. All valves shall be operated from the valve itself and not at the driver's seat or by remote control.
4. The pump shall be leakproof and spillproof.
5. A special hose for cleaning purposes must be carried. All hoses and pipes used in cleaning shall be flushed back into the tank being cleaned and not onto the ground or premises. The hose shall be equipped with a dual check valve to prevent backflow of contaminated water into the customer's water system. A customer's hose shall not be used.

PUMPING, CLEANING AND INSPECTION PROCEDURES

1. All permittees and their employees must follow proper procedures for pumping, cleaning, and inspecting the septic tank, as described below.
2. All liquid and accumulated solids shall be removed from all compartments of the septic tank. The water hose shall be used as an aid in loosening solids for removal.
3. During the cleaning operation, the following conditions of the tank shall be noted and recorded on the pumping report to be provided to the property owner and the County:
 - a. Signs of surfacing effluent at the tank or at other areas of the property. Check leachfield location. If not known check file at EHS.
 - b. High liquid level (or signs of past high liquid level) which might indicate backup from leachfield.
 - c. Backflow of water from the leachfield as the tank is pumped, which might indicate leachfield failure and/or high groundwater.
 - d. Low liquid level in the tank, which might indicate tank leakage.
 - e. Inflow of groundwater through openings in the tank as it is pumped down.
 - f. Septic tank size, material, and condition: rotten sides or top, broken baffles, broken tees or elbows in inlet or

outlet, etc.

4. The present or potential presence of hazardous materials such as paints, solvents, caustic chemicals, etc., should be noted and reported immediately to Environmental Health (454-2022). Septic tank sludge containing such materials must only be disposed of at sites designated by Environmental Health for disposal of such contaminated sludge.
5. Upon completion of the cleaning operation, the manhole covers or top of the tank shall be properly replaced and sealed.
6. Any minor spillage of waste resulting from the cleaning operation shall be cleaned by rinsing with water. Major spillage shall be removed, disinfected, or buried. The Environmental Health Service must be notified if the spill is significant, as defined in the next section.

DISPOSAL OF SEPTIC TANK CLEANINGS

1. Septic tank cleanings shall be disposed of only by disposal into a public septage receiving facility, if permission is first secured from officials in charge of the facility.
2. If a significant spill of septic tank sludge occurs, or if sludge is discharged to an unapproved site, the operator shall immediately notify Environmental Health at 454-2022, and shall take steps to clean-up the spill, disinfect the area, and prevent any discharge to a waterway. A significant spill is any spill that occurs in a public right-of-way, that enters a waterway or water source, that leaves the property where the spill occurs, or that exceeds 15 gallons in volume.
3. Septic tank sludge or chemical toilet cleanings containing hazardous materials, as defined in County Code Chapter 7.100, including, but not limited to, gasoline, caustic chemicals, paints, solvents, or materials which may interface with the processes of a wastewater treatment plant, may only be discharged to a Class I disposal site or other site specifically approved by Environmental Health for disposal of contaminated sludge.

REPORTS

1. Reports shall be made to Environmental Health monthly, providing a report for each septic tank pumped on a separate sheet of paper (Attachment 2 [HSA-403]), and by providing a summary log of all tanks pumped for that month (Attachment 3 [EHS-59]) for each tank. Haulaway pumping may be made on a separate log showing APN, address, owner name, date, volume pumped, and disposal location. Reports shall be made on forms supplied by Environmental Health or on other approved forms and shall contain the following information:
 - a. Date tank pumped.
 - b. Property owner's name and address of the property where the septic tank is located.
 - c. Assessor's Parcel Number.
 - d. Property use (note if residential property is vacant).
 - e. Reason for tank cleaning (Maintenance, Haulaway, Sale-Inspection, System Failure, etc.)
 - f. Date tank last pumped, if known.
 - g. Location of septic tank on property (sketch or describe).
 - h. Gallons pumped.
 - i. Septic tank or sump size (in gallons, or inside dimensions below inlet pipe).
 - j. Septic tank material and condition (broken baffles, broken tees, rotten sides or top, leaks, etc.).
 - k. Indications of septic system failure (high liquid level, backflow, surfacing sewage onsite, etc.). Note if the system is a pump-up.
 - l. Description of any repair work done to the tank or system. (Note: all major report work requires a permit from Environmental Health).
 - m. Location of septage disposal site used.
2. Monthly reports of pumpings from chemical toilets need only indicate total volumes pumped during the month, number of pumpings, and location of disposal.
3. All septic tank cleaners must provide to the person contracting to have the tank pumped, a receipt bearing the name and address of the licensed pumpmer and the address of the tank pumped.
4. Grease trap log reports shall be submitted to Environmental Health on a monthly basis.
5. Haulaway pumping log reports shall be submitted to Environmental Health on a monthly basis.

