

Salem County Department of Health and Human Services

ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION

110 Fifth Street, Suite 400 – Salem, New Jersey 08079

856-935-7510 ext. 8448 - 856-358-3857



Fax 856-935-8483

Septic System Question and Answer Sheet

Question – Does STATE code require that I get my septic system “certified” prior to selling my home?

Answer – No, the state septic code (NJAC 7:9A) does not require that the septic system be certified or inspected during a real estate transaction. The code does identify minimum requirements to be a “state recognized inspection.” Some mortgage companies, buyers, or banks require septic system inspections during the real estate transfer process. Septic System inspections for real estate transactions are conducted by an independent third party and NOT the County Health Department. The Health Department does not resolve disputes between buyers and sellers related to septic system inspections. Any problems identified in the report by the system inspector must be resolved between the parties involved in the transfer.

Question – Who is certified to install septic systems in New Jersey, and who can conduct septic system inspections for real estate transfer?

Answer – Except for Advanced Treatment systems, there are no licensing requirements for septic installers or septic system inspectors for real estate transactions in the state of New Jersey. For Advanced Treatment systems, the installer must be trained by the manufacturer of that particular unit and must have an Advanced Level certification from the National Environmental Health Association. The rule of thumb for homeowners is to select an installer who is knowledgeable with the regulations and who has years of experience in septic system installation in the state of New Jersey. A homeowner can install his or her own septic system; however, there are procedures that must be followed. Inspections are still mandated. **Any work conducted on a septic system must have prior approval from the Salem County Health Department.**

Question – Can I continue to use my cesspool?

Answer - Since the revision to the state septic code in 2012, cesspools are **not** defined as legal systems. If cesspools are found to be malfunctioning during a complaint investigation by the Salem County Health Department or during a septic system

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inspection for a real estate transfer, the code requires that they must immediately be upgraded with very limited exceptions. The Salem County Health Department is not evaluating which properties in the county are using cesspools except in the 2 situations noted above.

Question: How do I properly maintain my septic system , and how often should I get my system pumped out?

Answer – The current recommendation for pumping your septic tank is at least once every 3 years by a licensed septic pumper/waste hauler. The Salem County Department of Health has a homeowner guide available with more information. You can contact the Environmental Regulation division at 856-935-7510 x 8448 or you can request a copy via email – Carolyn.shoemaker@salemcountynj.gov

Question: Will Elsinboro Township be able to connect to a municipal sewage system?

Answer – The short answer is that we think Elsinboro demonstrates the need to have a municipal sewage system. The long answer is that it is a lengthy process to get there. The Salem County Department of Health and the Salem County Planning Department are working closely together and with NJDEP evaluate the needs and identify areas. We know Elsinboro Township has areas with lot sizes that are too small for conventional septic systems, areas with high water tables, and areas in the CAFRA zones. We also know that for some property owners in the Township the only alternative is to install an Advanced Treatment system, and the cost of \$30,000 to \$40,000 is prohibitive. The advanced treatment units also have mandatory maintenance and operation requirements – which add costs. We will continue to work with the Elsinboro Township Committee on this matter.