

How to Obtain an On-Site Wastewater Treatment (OWTS) System Permit

SUMMARY

A permit is required to construct, alter or repair an OWTS. Complete the steps below to obtain a final permit for your project.

1. Application and payment
2. Site and Soil Evaluation (not required for minor repairs and some change-of-use permits)
3. System design by engineer, designer, contractor or owner (see below for who can design systems)
4. Design approval and permit issuance by La Plata County Public Health (LPCPH) authorizing construction
 - NOTE: This step must be completed before LPCPH can approve a building permit application
5. Installation of system by LPCPH OWTS licensed installer/contractor
6. Construction inspection by LPCPH and designer/engineer
7. Final inspection by LPCPH (if required) and certification letter provided to LPCPH by designer/Engineer
8. Final permit issued
 - NOTE: This step must be completed before issuance of a certificate of occupancy by building departments

APPLICATION

First, complete an application for an On-site Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) permit. An application can be obtained at our Sawyer Dr office in Durango, or online at https://cms9.revize.com/revize/laplatacounty/departments/public_health_2/environmental_health/septic_systems/index.php (email us the completed form with signature).

OWTS Permit Application fees are:

- New Construction OWTS permit **\$1123** (for new systems and complete system replacement)
- Alteration OWTS permit **\$1068** (for system expansion and replacing failed soil treatment areas)
- Change-of-Use OWTS permit **\$518** (for changing the permitted use of an existing system)
- Minor Repair OWTS permit **\$408** (for replacing broken parts and septic tanks)

The Assessor's Parcel number (12-digit number found on Property Tax Notice or Notice of Value), the site address, the lot size and type of water supply are required to complete the Application. Owners or agents with Power of Attorney are required to sign the application. **Contractors may not sign on behalf of their clients without Power of Attorney** but may be the designated agent and point-of-contact for the project.

Upon receipt of a complete application and payment, LPCPH will assign you a *permit number* (WWPYEAR-XXXX). Write down your permit number for future document submissions and correspondence related to your project.

SITE AND SOIL EVALUATION

Except for minor repair permits, a complete site evaluation and soil test must be performed to identify the treatment capabilities of the soil and to adequately size the system. At least two eight-foot-deep pits will be dug around the area where the field will be constructed, and your engineer or a competent technician (see our list of currently-registered technicians) will examine these to identify soil types. The site and soil evaluation should be submitted to LPCPH with a reference to your *permit number*.

SYSTEM DESIGN

Septic systems may need to be designed by a Professional Engineer (PE) when adverse site conditions such as fast or slow percolating soil, high seasonal ground water, shallow bedrock, steep slopes, small lots or setback complications are encountered. If an engineer is not necessary, you are welcome to still contract with a PE or other professional designer. Many PEs are also Registered Soil Technicians, but any PE licensed in Colorado, registered or otherwise, may design a system. For minor repairs and some change-of-use permits, a full design is not required. Instead, a scope of work and/or a site plan may be required.

DESIGN APPROVAL AND PERMIT ISSUANCE

Design from a PE, other professional designer, contractor, or yourself must be submitted to LPCPH for approval to be sure it meets all regulations. For minor repair permits, a scope of work and site plan are required to be submitted. Submit design documents to LPCPH with a reference to your *permit number*. Once the design has been approved, a permit will be issued to you, specifying details of the OWTS being installed and any notes to the installer. The licensed System Contractor can then begin installing your system.

INSTALLATION BY LICENSED SYSTEM CONTRACTOR

Regulations require that the OWTS installer possess a current LPCPH System Contractor's License (see our website for a list of currently-licensed contractors). Property owners who wish to install their own OWTS can obtain a License by taking our installer's class (\$165), offered quarterly. See our website for more information. The System Contractor needs to coordinate with their designer and LPCPH throughout the installation process.

CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION (before backfill)

When construction of the OWTS is complete, but not yet backfilled, the Licensed System Contractor or property owner must contact their PE/designer and LPCPH to request an inspection. **This request must be made at least 2 full working days in advance of the desired inspection date.**

FINAL INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION

After the system passes the inspection, it can be covered and the ground can be graded as noted in the design. Once complete, the PE/designer will perform a final inspection and send: **1)** a letter certifying that the system was installed properly **2)** final photos **and 3)** a final site plan showing dimensions and setbacks. In certain instances, LPCPH may also need to perform a final grade inspection.

PERMIT FINALIZATION

LPCPH will review the final certification letter and photos, as well as all the other documentation on the system. If everything complies, a finalized permit will be issued.