



ON-SITE SEWAGE / SEPTIC SYSTEM (OSS) SITE EVALUATIONS

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS A SITE EVALUATION?

A Site Evaluation is a written determination by the OCPHD (Okanogan County Public Health District) as to whether an OSS (On-Site Sewage Disposal System) may be installed on a particular parcel of ground, and that it would meet the state and local health district requirements as of the date of the application. Unless otherwise specified, the developmental land use is assumed to be a single-family residence.

WHY SHOULD I READ THIS EXPLANATION OF SITE EVALUATIONS FOR A SEPTIC SYSTEM?

Understanding the value and limitations of a Site Evaluation could save the property owner future expenses and building delays.

WHY DO PEOPLE REQUEST A SITE EVALUATION?

Usually, people request a Site Evaluation for assurance that a parcel of land they are about to purchase can support an on-site sewage disposal system serving a single-family residence. Commitments to purchase land are often contingent upon an acceptable Site Evaluations.

DO SITE EVALUATIONS ALLOW PROPERTY OWNERS TO BEGIN PREPARING A PARCEL FOR BUILDING?

No. At the time of site evaluation, the OCPHD usually does not have information concerning building size, building placement, road placement, or well placement. Each of these design elements limits options for sewage drainfield design and placement. It is possible that building site preparations made prior to design of a sewage disposal system could render the site unbuildable.

DO SITE EVALUATIONS GUARANTEE AN ON-SITE SEWAGE SYSTEM CAN BE INSTALLED?

No. Site Evaluations consider the health codes and policies in effect at the time of evaluation, which periodically change. Site Evaluations are not considered legally binding on the OCPHD, though a moral commitment is recognized and Site Evaluations are honored whenever possible. Legal issues surrounding site evaluations have caused some health districts to stop offering the service altogether.

WHEN SHOULD I REQUEST A SITE EVALUATION?

A Site Evaluation is most appropriate when the applicant is not going to take steps to develop the property within two years or has not decided specifics of development, such as the number of bedrooms, layout of building, placement of the water system, etc.