

**JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH**  
**1801 19<sup>th</sup> St GOLDEN, CO 80401**  
**303 271-5700**  
<http://health.jeffco.us>

**POLICY FOR EVALUATING THE ADEQUACY OF  
EXISTING ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS  
PRIOR TO THE ISSUANCE OF BUILDING PERMITS OR TO RECONCILE  
WITH COUNTY ASSESSOR PROPERTY RECORDS**

**APPROVED: November 20, 2007**  
**AMENDED: September 16, 2014**  
**EFFECTIVE: October 16, 2014**

**PURPOSE**

To establish criteria and approval standards for evaluating the adequacy of an existing onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS) prior to the issuance of a building permit or to reconcile County Assessor records with regard to a bedroom count or sewage flow rate.

**RATIONALE**

In order to protect water quality and the environment, one of the Department's goals is to identify and eliminate OWTS that provide inadequate treatment and/or are prohibited. Cesspools and straight pipes are examples of systems that provide inadequate wastewater treatment and are prohibited.

To prevent overloading of an existing system it is necessary to verify that any remodeling or reconstruction work will not increase potential occupancy beyond the capacity of that system. If a destroyed dwelling is to be reconstructed, it will be necessary to verify that the existing system has been recently inspected and is operable. Additionally, occasions arise when County Assessor property records, for whatever reason, do not match up with JCPH OWTS permit records in terms of the number of bedrooms or sewage flow rate or other conditions of use.

**STATEMENT OF POLICY**

IT IS THE POLICY OF THE JEFFERSON COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH that the following definitions and standards shall govern the evaluation of the adequacy of existing onsite wastewater treatment systems for the purposes of obtaining a building permit to remodel or reconstruct an existing dwelling or structure and/or to reconcile the OWTS permit with the assessors records. Approval shall not be granted if the system is subject to a Notice of Violation or Cease and Desist order.

**DEFINITIONS**

"Bedroom" a room in a dwelling that is designed, built and intended for occupants and/or guests of the dwelling to sleep in. The number of bedrooms in a dwelling is used to calculate the total number of potential occupants of the dwelling and the amount of wastewater resulting from those occupants.

"Building Permit"	a construction permit issued by any governmental agency in Jefferson County, Colorado
"Reconstruction"	any construction work on an existing dwelling or structure that is currently uninhabitable or destroyed
"Remodeling"	<p>any construction work on an existing, occupied or habitable structure that would require the issuance of a building permit and that would:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. create additional rooms within the structure such as a den, bathroom, or home office;</li> <li>2. increase the interior square footage of the structure; or</li> <li>3. add bedrooms</li> </ol> <p>For the purpose of this policy, structures intended primarily for exterior use, such as porches, patios, decks, and sunrooms are excluded from this definition as are structures that do not contain plumbing fixtures, such as barns, sheds or garages.</p>
"System"	an onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS)

**APPROVAL STANDARDS**

Part 1 - Remodeling Projects

1. All systems shall meet the minimum requirements set forth in Section 10.2 - Minimum Criteria for the Approval of a Use Permit, Jefferson County Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Regulation (the "Regulation") as demonstrated by any of the following records or documents:
  - *any approved permit issued by the Department to install, repair, upgrade or replace the system;*
  - *a Use Permit issued by the Department;*
  - *an inspection report from a professional engineer; or*
  - *any other proof deemed acceptable by the health officer that demonstrates compliance with Section 10.2.*
2. To add bedrooms, the system must also have sufficient capacity to treat the proposed increase in wastewater loading based on the requirements in Part 3.
3. A current inspection of the existing system shall not be required unless necessary to meet the requirements of Part 1 of this Policy.

Part 2 - Reconstruction Projects

1. The existing system must meet the requirements of Part 3.
2. Approval shall not be granted if the system is subject to a Notice of Violation or Cease and Desist order.

### Part 3 - Adding Bedrooms/Reconciling County Assessor Records

To determine if an existing system is adequate to accommodate additional bedrooms or additional wastewater flow, the installation record for the existing system must be on file; if there is no such record the request will not be considered.

At a minimum, the record for the existing system must include the type and size of the absorption system, the type, size, and number of compartments of the septic tank, soil test information (such as percolation tests and / or gradation analysis) to permit the calculations set forth in item 4, below. If that soil test information is not available, a professional engineer may conduct such soil tests in accordance with Section 12 of the Regulations.

#### **EVALUATION PROCEDURES**

1. Staff will review installation records for the current OWTS to verify that the existing tanks and other components meet current requirements for size and number of compartments.
2. Staff will review the original engineering report (or the current report submitted by a professional engineer) to determine the soil conditions and wastewater flow rates that were the basis for the original design, such as gradation analysis, percolation rates, etc. Using that information staff will then calculate the required size of the STA based on current regulations and the additional bedroom(s).
3. If the existing STA meets the following criteria it will be deemed technically adequate to accommodate the additional bedroom(s):
  - *For systems less than ten years old: 100% of current required size*
  - *For systems 10-20 years old: 125% of current required size*
  - *For systems over 20 years old: 150% of current required size*
4. In addition to determining the technical capacity of the system to accommodate an increase in the number of bedrooms or additional wastewater flow, the following requirements shall apply.
  - A. A Use Permit shall be obtained for the existing system. All components must pass inspection.
  - B. If any of the following conditions are noted during the use permit inspection it will be assumed that the existing soil treatment area (STA) is saturated and would be incapable of accommodating an additional bedroom or additional wastewater flow:
    - *There is evidence of past effluent discharge from any component, such as soil or vegetation staining, paper or other debris, etc.*
    - *The ground above the STA is soggy or damp (except when caused by snow or rain).*
    - *There is more than 1-inch of liquid standing in the vent pipe and/or more than 7-inches of liquid standing in the observation pipe.*
    - *The liquid level of the septic tank was found to be above the outlet invert*

*and / or there was wastewater back flow from the absorption system into the tank after it was pumped.*

4. Approval may be granted if all of the required conditions in this Part 3 are met. An effluent filter must be installed if not present in the tank. A dosing siphon or pump is not required.
5. Approval shall not be granted if the system is subject to a Notice of Violation or Cease and Desist order.

#### Part 4 - Noncompliant Systems

1. When the Department determines that a system fails to comply with any of the provisions of this policy, written notice shall be sent to the owner stating the basis for the denial.
2. The owner may then request the Board to review the denial by submitting a written statement setting forth the reasons why they believe approval should be granted. This statement should be received at least two weeks prior to the hearing to allow staff to evaluate the proposal and prepare their comments
3. The owner (or representative) may then appear at the next regular monthly meeting of the Board of Health to present testimony regarding their request. Copies of documents produced by the owner in support of their request must be left with the Secretary to the Board.

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