



San Juan County
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POLICIES/PROCEDURES/INTERPRETATIONS

**INSPECTION OF EXISTING ON-SITE SEWAGE SYSTEMS
 AND PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS**

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ISSUE: What shall be the permitting restrictions associated with the inspection and maintenance of on-site sewage systems of Section 8.16.160.G1 of the San Juan County Code (SJCC)?

ANALYSIS: In order to verify the required Operation and Maintenance of “on-site sewage systems” in existing buildings, Section 8.16.160.G.1 of the San Juan County Code (as amended by Ordinance 58-2007) specifies that:

“Verification of satisfactory inspections conducted in accordance with Table VA will be required prior to;

1. Sale of the residence; or
2. Obtaining a building permit.”

Table VA requires the following inspection intervals:

Inspection Interval	Type of System(s)
Quarterly	Restaurants, Deli’s, and Markets
Yearly	Residential Pressure Distribution, Mound or Sand Filter Systems Proprietary Treatment Systems Systems Serving Transient Accommodations Systems Serving Other Commercial Establishments
Three Years	Residential Gravity Systems (conventional septic tank and leach field)

POLICY: This policy is adopted in order to verify the required Operation and Maintenance Inspections, of Section 8.16.160.G.1 of the SJCC, and to show compliance with applicable design requirements on lots served by an existing “on-site sewage system”.

The owner/applicant of a building permit shall be required to demonstrate to the Health Department that the existing septic system has been inspected and is in compliance with all applicable Health Department Regulations.

Where the work covered by the building permit will increase anticipated or design sewage flows, or involves a change of use, the on-site sewage system must be shown and, where necessary, be redesigned to be in full compliance with all current applicable codes and regulations.

The nature of the work covered by your building permit (i.e. creation of additional bedrooms, installation of commercial fixtures, or change of use) may also require that your septic system be reevaluated and/or redesigned to adequately handle any additional fixtures and/or revised design requirements.

Questions about the requirements for septic design and testing shall be directed to the Health Department at (360) 378-4474.

Environmental Health On-site Sewage Requirements for Building Permit Proposals Served by Existing Systems

Revised: 3/17/08

I. Existing On-site Septic System – Complete Records

Expansions – Increases in anticipated sewage flows by either increasing the number of bedrooms beyond the total approved on the septic permit or changing the use of the structure (e.g.: residential to commercial), or changes that would result in adverse impact on the existing system & reserve.

- **Requirements** – System and reserve must be in compliance with current codes. This typically will require submittal of a new or revised design showing how system will be expanded to accommodate increase flows.

Additions/Remodels – No increase in anticipated sewage flow or number of bedrooms and no structural or use changes that would adversely impact the existing system and/or reserve area.

- **Requirements** – System must be non-failing. In order to document the system is non-failing; the applicant must submit a pumper's or wastewater inspector's report, from the past 3 years for gravity systems and within the past year for all other systems (pressure distribution, sand filters, aerobic units, etc.), documenting the non-failing status of the system. Note: Gravity systems installed within last 3 years are exempt from this requirement.

Structural Repairs – Routine maintenance and repair of roofs, foundations or walls without restructuring the basic floor plan of the residence.

- **Requirements** – Not applicable

II. Existing On-site Septic System – Incomplete Records

Expansions (see definition above) - System and reserve must be in compliance with current codes. This typically will require submittal of a new or revised design showing how system will be expanded to accommodate increase flows. Proposals to add onto or utilize the existing system will require completion of an as-built for the existing system showing location, layout, depth to bottom of trench, soil type & depth of profile and other key components.

Additions/Remodels that Expand Building Footprint (but do not increase the load) - System must be non-failing. In order to document the system is non-failing, the applicant must submit a pumper's or wastewater inspector's report, from the past 3 years for gravity systems and within the past year for all other systems (pressure distribution, sand filters, aerobic units, etc.), documenting the non-failing status of the system. In addition, a designer must complete an as-built drawing documenting the primary and reserve drainfield area.

Internal Remodels Only - System must be non-failing. In order to document the system is non-failing; the applicant must submit a pumper's or wastewater inspector's report, from the past 3 years for gravity systems and within the past year for all other systems (pressure distribution, sand filters, aerobic units, etc.), documenting the non-failing status of the system.

Structural Repairs (see definition above) – No requirements

*Note: *Systems installed within last 15 years should have complete records on file. If no records can be found, the applicant must apply for an on-site septic design (including new design fee), expose the ends of each lateral to verify length and layout, dig a test hole adjacent to the drainfield and two test holes in an area suitable for a reserve field. A designer must complete an as-built drawing and submit records for the system.*

**Systems installed since 01/01/1998 – if never used – do not require a septic inspection if they have passed a "Final" installation inspection.*