



## ***COLORADO***

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STATE BOARD OF HEALTH  
GUIDELINES ON INDIVIDUAL SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS  
5 CCR 1003-6  
November 30, 2004

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/op/regs/waterqualitycontroldivision/100306individualsewagedisposalsystems.pdf>

In Colorado, wastewater regulations are administered across the state by local health agencies – generally county level, with some regional and occasional municipal administration. These rules apply statewide and can be made more stringent at the local level in some areas. Local regulations must be submitted to the state for review and approval but there are few areas in which local regulations cannot be made more stringent.

Technologies approved for use in Colorado include (1) conventional systems, i.e., septic tanks, soil absorption beds and trenches, absorption or seepage pits, dry wells, sand filters, mounds, and evapotranspiration beds; (2) alternative systems, i.e., gravelless chambers, some gravelless pipe systems, constructed wetlands, composting and incineration toilets, aerobic systems with NSF Std. 40 certification; and (3) experimental systems, for which each installation requires local Board of Health approval and a dedicated site for replacement with a conventional or alternative system. Colorado has identified no specific products or technologies as experimental. A new technology may be approved as experimental by a local board of health—this requires approval for each individual installation and requires removal upon system failure. New technologies can receive certification by the State. This would allow installation with only local staff approval, but the process involves review by a Technical Advisory Committee, which

recommends approval, conditions of approval, or denial to the State. The Colorado Department of Health & Environment has final approval authority.

Colorado Code allows for drainfield area/size reductions in gravelless absorption field systems, permanently installed low-flow fixtures, and dosing systems. The maximum reduction is 50%, and no other reductions are allowed.

For onsite wastewater demonstration, research, or testing projects in Colorado contact:

Mr. Robert Siegrist, PhD, P.E.,  
Professor and Interim Director, Environmental Science & Engineering Department  
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State Code does not recognize or require management programs/contracts or management districts, to monitor and maintain onsite systems or individual septic disposal systems, nor are there plans to develop such programs within the next year.

There is no perpetual maintenance on mechanical systems that have surface discharge, required by the state.

In Colorado, a failed system is not defined in either statute or regulation. There is no reporting of system failures, or causes, to the state. Oversight of systems is done at the local health agency level. No reporting to the state is required.

If a system is considered to be failing or to have failed, the protocol for initiating repair or replacement is at the discretion of the local health agency unless enforcement is taken. Enforcement requires issuance of written notice, a hearing not less than 48 hours of issuance of written notice, and issuance of a cease-and-desist order. The order must require the owner to bring the system into compliance in a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 30 days, or thereafter cease and desist from use of the system.

No funding program or mechanism exists to assist homeowners either replacing failing systems or installing new systems, and there are no plans to develop such a mechanism within the next year. Currently, there are no counties or communities within the state that have a revolving loan fund or other financial assistance programs for individual homeowners. Entities or programs that may offer homeowners insurance policies for their onsite treatment system is unknown at this time.

Colorado does not have a pre-sale inspection protocol for onsite wastewater systems during property transfers. Regular inspections also are not required by the State for investigating the performance and operation of onsite systems after initial construction. If a homeowner requests an inspection, some local health agencies will perform system

inspections for a fee. Otherwise, the homeowner has very limited options, though some consulting firms will perform this service, again for a fee. There are no standards, and there is no licensing for who may perform such inspections. Site evaluations can be performed by local health department staff or by a Registered Professional Engineer. The state does require percolation tests or soil characterization as part of the site evaluation.

Permits are issued by the state, but not kept track of for the construction of new sites, repair of existing systems, or for upgrade or modification. There are different permits required for alternative/experimental/innovative technologies. This category requires approval by the local Board of Health as opposed to a staff level approval for a standard system and must provide for a timely replacement with a standard type system in the event that the experimental system fails.

The State does not require the use of septic tank effluent filters for onsite wastewater treatment systems. There is no minimum lot size for the placement and use of an onsite wastewater treatment system.

Minimum setback/separation distances include:

	<u>Septic Tank</u>	<u>Drainfield</u>
• Dwelling/structure -	5'	20'
• Well-private well -	50'	100'
• Surface water -	50'	50'
• Property lines -	10'	10'
• Seasonal high water table/limiting layer -	-	4'
• Wetlands -	-	-

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Information about municipal wastewater is available by contacting Mr. David Akers, Water Quality Protection Section Manager, Water Quality Control Division, by phoning (303) 692-3591, or at the email address [dave.akers@state.co.us](mailto:dave.akers@state.co.us)