State of Louisiana
Department of Health and Hospitals
Center for Environmental Health Services

http://www.privatewaterandsewage.dhh.louisiana.gov

All onsite wastewater regulations, as specified in Part 13 of Title 51 of the Louisiana Administrative Code (LAC), apply statewide, and can or may be more stringent for local governments. Title 51 of the LAC, revised as of January 2012, can be obtained at http://doa.louisiana.gov/oslac/books.htm

The Onsite Wastewater Program’s mission is to protect and promote the health of the citizens of Louisiana by preventing untreated and/or improperly treated sewage from being discharged into the environment and preventing contamination of potable water sources. Our goals and objectives are to increase public awareness, through guidance and dissemination of information, on the importance of proper wastewater treatment and protecting water supplies for developing areas of the state that do not have community sewage and water; promote education and increased professionalism for the state licensed installers and maintenance providers of onsite wastewater treatment systems; promote coordinated efforts between parish entities and state employees, and encourage manufacturers of onsite wastewater treatment systems to develop structured training programs for the installers they endorse.

As a prerequisite to licensing, installers/maintenance providers of individual onsite wastewater treatment systems are required to attend and successfully complete a training course approved by the Sanitarian Services Section of the Office of Public Health (OPH), Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH). This course must be taken every five years. Course enrollment information and a study guide are provided under “Related Links” at http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/newsroom/detail/2080. Every installer/maintenance provider must secure general liability insurance in the amount of $100,000/$300,000 for the duration of the license. Installer/maintenance provider licenses expire each year on January 31st. Licensing fees apply annually and must accompany installer license renewal packets. Packets can be obtained at http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/newsroom/detail/2089.

The individual onsite wastewater treatment system is utilized for the treatment and disposal of sewage whenever the state health officer determines that it is not feasible to connect to a community system and installation and operation of an individual onsite wastewater treatment system is not likely to create a nuisance or a public health hazard. Permitted individual mechanical plants must comply with
the National Sanitation Foundation International Standard, NSF 40-1996 (Class I Systems) and ANSI/NSF 40-1996 (Class I Systems).

Upon submittal of plans, by the property owner or his/her designated agent, a sanitarian at the parish Environmental Services office conducts a review of the plans and a site evaluation. Percolation tests or soil characterization is required as part of the site evaluation. The appropriate type of individual onsite wastewater treatment system and necessary size is determined by the sanitarian and specified on a temporary permit which is issued to the property owner/agent. A final permit is issued upon verification that the individual onsite wastewater treatment system has been installed in compliance with LAC, Title 51, Part 13 and the permit specifications. Specifications on permitted onsite wastewater treatment systems and the associated maintenance records are entered in a database. The systems can be tracked with an identification tag number that is unique to each system. Identification tags are purchased by the manufacturer or their authorized representative for a fee of $100 per tag.

After installation of a mechanical treatment plant, the installer must submit “Individual Mechanical Plant Initial Warranty Inspection/Service Reports” every six months for two years. Beyond this initial two year period, the State requires the owner to provide perpetual maintenance on mechanical treatment systems. The perpetual maintenance may be in the form of an extended service contract with a licensed installer or the homeowner may perform the maintenance checks if he/she has successfully completed the Homeowner Maintenance Program for mechanical wastewater systems within five years. The mechanical plant should be pumped out every four years and the septic tank must be pumped out every eight years as a part of regular maintenance. When a signed complaint is submitted to DHH-OPH, an inspection is conducted to verify the complaint. If an inspection is requested by a homeowner, a licensed installer/maintenance provider and/or a sanitarian would perform the inspection depending on the purpose of the inspection.

In Louisiana, a failed system is one that is not meeting the requirements set forth in the LAC, Title 51, Part 13. Lack of proper maintenance, poor installation, and lack of homeowner education are cited as the most common reasons for system failure in the state. The State does not provide funding or financing options for individual homeowners for the repair, replacement, or new construction of onsite wastewater treatment systems. However, the department offers the Homeowner Maintenance Program for mechanical wastewater systems, which enables the homeowner to become more knowledgeable and actively participate in the maintenance of their own system.

Please visit our web page at www.privatewaterandsewage.dhh.louisiana.gov.

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