

PENNSYLVANIA

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<http://www.dep.state.pa.us/>



Title 25 Environmental Protection
Department of Environmental Protection
Chapter 71, 72, and 73
Standards for Sewage Disposal Facilities
October 2, 1999

http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/025/chapter71/025_0071.pdf

http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/025/chapter72/025_0072.pdf

http://www.pacode.com/secure/data/025/chapter73/025_0073.pdf

Pennsylvania's Regulations were last updated in 1999. Pennsylvania is currently in the initial stages of revising these regulations. The revisions will reorganize the regulations for better clarity and will update requirements within the limitations of the current statute (Act 537 of 1966). Updates will primarily impact: sewage facilities planning and permitting, reclassification of many alternate systems to conventional, and both design and installation requirements for onsite technologies. Operation and maintenance needs for described technologies will be clearly identified. The anticipated effective date for these regulations is uncertain.

Pennsylvania's regulations are primarily prescriptive in nature. Performance requirements and siting methodologies are employed for a limited number of alternate system technologies, largely within a prescriptive framework. Examples include systems incorporating media filters in shallow siting situations with at-grade beds, drip irrigation, spray irrigation, etc.

Technologies that are not currently described in either Chapter 73, or in a listing of technologies that have been “pre-classified” as alternate technologies, can be proposed to PA DEP for classification on a case-by-case basis as either an alternate or experimental technology.

Alternate technology systems are proposed to solve an existing pollution or public health problem, to overcome specific site suitability deficiencies, or as a substitute for conventional systems. Alternate technologies may also be used to overcome a specific engineering problem related to the site, its proposed use, or to utilize an experimental design which has been deemed successful by the Department, either in whole or in part, under varying site conditions. Proposals for alternate system approval must be submitted to PA DEP Central Office for review in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 73, Section 73.72.

Experimental technology systems are proposed to solve an existing pollution or public health problem, overcome specific site suitability deficiencies, or as a substitute for conventional systems on suitable lots. Experimental technologies are used to evaluate new concepts or technologies applicable to onlot dispersal, or utilize an experimental design that has been deemed successful by the Department under varying site conditions. Experimental proposals must be evaluated in accordance with Chapter 73, Section 73.71 and through the Pennsylvania Experimental Onlot Wastewater Technology Verification Program. Details on this program can be found at:

<http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/watersupply/cwp/view.asp?a=1260&Q=449298&watersupplyNav=|30160|#OLDS>

Chapter 71 requires municipalities use their sewage facilities planning efforts to identify specific operation and maintenance requirements for sewage facilities, to demonstrate responsible means for assuring those needs over the long term, and to propose the legal and financial arrangements necessary for implementing those means. Sewage management programs, as described in Chapter 71, Subchapter E, are recognized as the preferred method for the long-term assurance of operation and maintenance requirements with sewage facilities.

PA DEP has specific authority to require sewage facilities planning to consider sewage management programs when: existing sewage facilities are not being properly operated and maintained; planning proposals for new land development do not adequately address the administrative, technical or legal functions needed to carry out operation and maintenance of the proposed facilities; or an official plan or revision shows that existing or new sewage facilities need periodic inspection, operation or maintenance to provide long-term proper operation. For more information on sewage management programs operating in Pennsylvania, please contact Mr. John Borland at (717) 783-7423, or at jborland@state.pa.us.

Sewage Enforcement Officers are required to attend prerequisite training (a sewage enforcement officer academy), successfully pass a combined written and field practical

examination, and regularly complete continuing education courses as a part of certification. PA DEP is also obligated to provide voluntary training to sewage facility installers and list those installers who have completed training. Installers, however, are not certified in Pennsylvania. Sewage Enforcement Officer certifications must be renewed every two years. Fifteen hours of continuing education is required for renewal. Certification is subject to suspension or revocation by PA DEP for violations of Act 537 or the regulations promulgated there under.

Generally, the sewage enforcement officer would conduct regulatory inspections, often in concert with a municipal sewage management program. Fees would be in accordance with the fee schedule approved by the local agency for that jurisdiction. Real estate transfer inspections are not regulated in Pennsylvania. Sewage Enforcement Officers employed or contracted by municipal or multi-municipal local agencies conduct, observe or monitor site evaluations pertaining to the permitting and installation of onlot (onsite) systems. They are specifically prohibited from designing systems based upon such soil work and for which they will subsequently issue a construction permit. Sewage Enforcement Officers are trained and certified by PA DEP. Depending upon the technology being proposed and the specific site conditions encountered either percolation testing or soil characterization may be used in Pennsylvania. Soil morphological (characterization) evaluation is most commonly conducted for shallow soil onlot systems and drip irrigation systems.

Sewage enforcement officers issue permits at the local level for conventional soil-based (onlot) systems designed for treating under 10,000 gpd. Sewage enforcement officers also issue permits for alternate systems, without PA DEP review, where they have the requisite training and/or experience specific to the system. Permits for community onlot systems over 10,000 gallons and surface discharge systems requiring NPDES permits are issued by the state. Permits are issued for the construction, repair, and upgrade/modification of onsite systems. Numbers of permits are recorded for all conditions. Different permits are required for alternative/experimental/innovative systems that would have additional testing and reporting requirements and a back-up proposed system should the experimental system fail. Local Municipal SEOs issue the routine permits. DEP issues the larger permits (>10,000 gpd) or experimental and unproven systems and designs. Different permits are not required for alternate/experimental/innovative technologies in the State of Pennsylvania. The same type of construction permit is issued for each system but the permit application would be marked to indicate a conventional, alternate, or experimental system classification. For more information, please contact Mr. Novinger at the address above.

A funding program exists to assist homeowners for replacing failing systems, repairing a failing or malfunctioning system, but not for new construction of an onsite wastewater treatment system. For more information, please contact:

Mr. Lou Buffington
Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (Pennvest)
22 South Third Street
4th Floor
Harrisburg, **Pennsylvania** 17101
(717) 787-8138
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Academy and continuing education training for sewage enforcement officers is available through the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSATS). Visit the training web site at: <http://www.psats.org/seo.html>, contact Ms. Karen Atkinson, PSATS at (717) 763-0930, or contact PA DEP through the contact information provided above.

For information about ongoing onsite wastewater demonstration, research or testing projects, please contact:

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