

RHODE ISLAND

Ms. Deb Knauss, Senior Environmental Planner
Rhode Island Department of Environmental
Management

Or

Mr. Ernie Panciera, Principal Environmental Scientist
Rhode Island Department of Environmental
Management
Office of Water Resources ISDS Section
235 Promenade Street
Providence, **Rhode Island** 02908-5767
(401) 222-4700, ext. 7612 or ext. 7603 (respectively)
(401) 222-3564 (fax)

dknauss@dem.state.ri.us

epancier@dem.state.ri.us

[http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/
water/index.htm](http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/water/index.htm)



Rules and Regulations Establishing Minimum Standards Relating to
Location, Design, Construction and Maintenance
of Individual Sewage Disposal Systems
January 2002

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/pubs/regs/regs/water/isdsregs.pdf>

Onsite regulations for Rhode Island were last amended in January 2002. The state is working on a large-scale re-write. Progress on these regulatory revisions has been delayed by other Department priorities; thus no expected effective date can be given.

The RI Department of Environmental Management (DEM) Onsite Regulations are not performance based. The state does have an Innovative and Alternative Technology Program, which maintains a list of approved technologies. Currently, there is only one municipality in Rhode Island which has a performance based local ordinance. Block Island (New Shoreham) has established two treatment zones as a function of a property's proximity to sensitive areas, with the T1 zone allowing conventional systems, while the T2 zone requires advanced treatment.

In Rhode Island, any technology not listed within state code can be used following the Innovative and Alternative Technology Program for review of Innovative/Alternative technologies. A vendor or manufacturer is required to submit an application for review of the technology. The form is available at:

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/water/permits/isds/pdfs/innovfrm.pdf>.

Following DEM review of the application, it is considered by the Technical Review Committee, which makes a recommendation to DEM to approve or not approve. Approved Technologies are issued a certification specifying the terms of use in RI.

Rhode Island Code does not require management contracts to monitor and maintain onsite systems or individual liquid waste. However, the certification letters for approved technologies specify O&M provisions, and applications for ISDS designs incorporating a Department-approved innovative or alternative technology requiring special operation and maintenance procedures must include a maintenance contract. Additionally, while management districts are not cited in the ISDS code, municipalities do have the authority to create management districts with these requirements. At the state level, there is no approval required of municipal ordinances.

The following table indicates which onsite wastewater professionals are required to be certified. All of the licenses issued are renewable every two years. There is a continuing education requirement of Classes I, II, III and IV.

License	Authority	Eligibility to apply for exam
Installers	Installation	No professional or educational requirement
Class I	Design repairs – conventional/residential - design flow: 900 gpd or less or I/A system - residential use designated by the Director as suitable for a CI- I - design flow of 900 gpd or less	A valid license Installer’s License or RI registered PLS or PE. PEs registered in Rhode Island after December 31, 1994 must be registered as Civil or Environmental.
Class II	<p>Repair or alteration provided system meets one of the criteria below:</p> <p>(A) Conventional ISDS - residential use - design flow of 2000 gpd or less;</p> <p>(B) Alternative system - residential use designated by the Director as suitable for a Class II designer - design flow of 2000 gpd or less;</p> <p>(C) Conventional ISDS - commercial use - design flow of 900 gpd or less; or</p> <p>(D) Alternative system - commercial use designated by the Director as suitable for a Class II designer - design flow of 900 gpd or less.</p> <p>Design new system, provided system meets one of the criteria above in (b)(1)(A)-(D) and is on a lot that does not require a variance from any of the following provisions of the regulations:</p> <p>(A) SD 15.02 -- prohibition of system installation in areas where there is a shallow depth to the groundwater table or to an impervious layer from the original ground surface;</p> <p>(B) SD 3.05(6) and 3.05(10); or</p> <p>(C) In critical resource areas, as defined in SD 19.00, setbacks established in Table 19.1 and SD 3.05(1).</p>	A RI registered PLS or PE. PEs registered in Rhode Island after December 31, 1994 must be registered as Civil or Environmental.
Class III	Design of any ISDS provided for under regulations.	A RI registered PLS or PE. PEs registered in Rhode Island after December 31, 1994 must be registered as Civil or Environmental.
Class IV (Soil Evaluators)	Performance of soil evaluations described in SD 26.00.	<p>1) Registration as a professional soil scientist by the Society of Soil Scientists of Southern New England or the American Registry of Certified Professionals in Agronomy, Crops and Soils; or</p> <p>2) 4 years experience in soil studies and perc testing for septic system design in RI or soil classification, mapping, interpretation or a combination thereof; and</p> <p>successful completion of 9 semester hours in soil science from an accredited college or university;</p> <p>or</p> <p>3) 2 years experience in soil studies and perc testing for septic system design in RI or soil classification, mapping, interpretation or a combination thereof; and a bachelor's degree or graduate degree from an accredited college or university in soil science, geology, engineering or similar discipline with successful completion of 9 semester hours in soil science.</p>

Generally, in the State of Rhode Island inspections are performed by private professionals or trades people. A state inspector will investigate a complaint of a system suspected to be failing, at no cost to the homeowner. The State does not conduct maintenance inspections. Some municipalities have, as an element of a wastewater management plan or ordinance, a requirement for regular inspections: they specify qualifications/criteria necessary for the individual to possess in order to conduct inspections. Municipalities with inspection requirements have criteria which must be met in order to be placed on the list of inspectors in that municipality. The University of Rhode Island, Cooperative Extension Onsite Wastewater Training Center offers two inspection courses, one of which is required to be taken for listing as an inspector by many, if not all of the municipalities with inspection requirements.

DEM licensed soil evaluators are responsible for conducting site evaluations before an onsite system is installed or approved for use. Our site evaluation procedure incorporates two elements. The Site Evaluation and the Soil Evaluation: The Site Evaluation and Soil Evaluation procedures are described in the regulations in sections SD 26.00 and SD 26.01 respectively.

The Site Evaluation provides site locus and location of proposed system. It identifies specific site conditions and limitations and location of sensitive receptors relative to the proposed dispersal area. It may be completed by a Class II or III designer or by a Class IV Soil Evaluator.

The Soil Evaluation must be prepared by a Class IV Soil Evaluator. Two test holes in the area of the proposed system must be described to a depth of 10 feet, though due to OSHA regulations, we do not require that the soil evaluator enter the pit below the depth of 5 feet; soil is to be sampled from the bucket of the backhoe. For each soil horizon, the soil evaluator reports depth, color, presence and characteristics of redoximorphic features (abundance, size and contrast), texture, structure and consistence, seasonal high watertable. Perforated pipe must be installed in the pits upon backfilling. Soil Evaluations may be witnessed by the Department.

Permits are issued for new construction, repair of existing systems, and upgrade or modification of onsite systems. Permits are issued at the State level, by the Department of Environmental Management. Local requirements may be more stringent; review of designs for compliance with local requirements occurs at the local level.

The number of permits for all conditions are kept track. For more information contact:

Ms. Linda Washington
RI DEM – OWR
235 Promenade Street
Providence, **Rhode Island** 02908
(401) 222-4700 ext. 7718
(401) 222-3564 (fax)
linda.washington@dem.ri.gov

Different permits for alternative/innovative systems are not required. If the technology is on the list of approved technologies, a standard application of the appropriate type is submitted (new construction, alteration, repair, or variance if the design is not able to meet the requirements of the regulations). If the technology is not on the list of approved technologies, a variance application must be submitted for use of the technology. These data are maintained in the permitting program's database.

State Revolving Funds (SRF) makes loans available to municipalities which have DEM-approved Wastewater Management Ordinances. The municipality in turn makes the low interest loans to the homeowner for repair/replacement of failing systems. However, at this time, no funds are reported available for the installation of new onsite wastewater treatment systems. For additional information you may contact:

Mr. Jim Riordan, Principal Environmental Scientist
RIDEM – Office of Water Resources
235 Promenade St.
Providence, **Rhode Island** 02908-5767
(401) 222-4700, ext. 4421
(401) 222-3564 (fax)
jriordan@dem.state.ri.us

Questions pertaining to ongoing onsite demonstration, research, or testing projects, as well as information concerning onsite training programs available in the state may be directed to:

Dr. George Loomis
University of Rhode Island Cooperative Extension
Onsite Wastewater Training Center
001C Coastal Institute in Kingston
Kingston, **Rhode Island** 02881
(401) 874-4558
(401) 874-4561 (fax)
gloomis@uri.edu

For information regarding training opportunities in the State of Rhode Island, please contact:

Dr. Jose A. Amador, PhD
CELS-NRS
024 Coastal Institute in Kingston
Kingston, **Rhode Island** 02881
(401) 874-2902
(401) 874-4561 (fax)
JAMADOR@URI.EDU

<http://www.uri.edu/cels/nrs/seml/>