Note: Information contained below for the State of Tennessee is from 2002. Updated information was not available at the time of creation for this document. Contact Mr. Dan Hoover, to check accuracy of information contained in this section.

TENNESSEE

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http://www.state.tn.us/sos/rules/1200/1200-01/1200-01-06.pdf

Regulations to Govern Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems
Chapter 1200-1-6
March 2001

Onsite regulations for Tennessee are currently under revision, starting within the next few months. Changes will occur throughout to approximately half of the regulations. The effective date is anticipated to be approximately June 2003.

Those technologies approved for use in Tennessee for onsite wastewater treatment and disposal include conventional gravel, large diameter gravelless pipe, chambers, low-pressure pipe, elevated sand mounds, and oxidation lagoons. A new law effective July 2000 allows advanced treatment systems meeting NSF Standard 41 to be used in conjunction with an approved disposal field that is allowed to be reduced in size by up to 40% only in those counties with an approved wastewater authority. There is also provision for experimental systems. Certain maintenance entities and contracts are mandated.

State Code allows for drainfield area/size reduction based on the technology and media, e.g., chambers and EZ Flow, and advanced treatment systems.

An onsite training center is in process by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and watershed associations. Questions may be directed to Dr. John Buchannon, University of Tennessee Agricultural Extension at jbuchan7@utk.edu, and the TVA.

Tennessee State Code requires management contracts or management districts to monitor/maintain onsite systems or individual septic disposal systems. Legislation exist that allows or specifies management entities for advanced treatment, (statutory) not regulation to develop advanced treatment by outside parties. The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation is the overseer of that program.

In Tennessee, a failed system is any system discharging to land surface or proven to be contaminating groundwater. The most common reasons for system failure include poor installation/construction, lack of proper maintenance, faulty or inadequate site evaluation, and inadequately sized system based on soil properties. If a system is considered to be failing or has failed, the legal procedure includes an investigation of the property. If the system is failing, the owner is advised in writing; the owner must come into compliance and apply for a replacement or repair permit.

No funding program exists to assist homeowners either replacing an individual failing system or installing a new one, nor are there plans to develop such a mechanism.

Tennessee does not have a pre-sale inspection protocol for onsite wastewater systems during property transfers; it is up to the individual lending agency. No regular inspections after initial construction are required by the state; generally it is routine oversight by the homeowner or investigation of a complaint. If a homeowner requests an inspection, the agency provides the service free of charge. The inspection is done by the local inspector at the health department.

There are no programs in the state that offer homeowners insurance policies for their onsite treatment systems.

The state allows the use of septic tank effluent filters for onsite wastewater treatment systems, but they are not required.

There is no real minimum lot size allowed for the placement and use of an onsite wastewater treatment system. It is based on soils, wastewater flow, and usage. For example, a small office with one/two employees and a bathroom could have a very small lot as long as the soil conditions can handle the flow.

For information about municipal wastewater regulations, one may contact:

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