

# PENN FOREST TOWNSHIP

*Sewage Enforcement Office*

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[www.pennforesttownship.org/home](http://www.pennforesttownship.org/home)

## **SUITABILITY TESTING & SEPTIC PERMITTING PROCEDURES**

### **SUITABILITY TESTING:**

1. Obtain a *Site Evaluation Application* from Penn Forest Township Municipal Building or download one from the Township's website (<http://pennforesttownship.org/sewage/>).
2. The following items **MUST** be placed and/or identified on the property:
  - A. Iron pins/markers and wooden stakes with flagging at all property corners.
  - B. The side and rear property lines must be distinctly flagged.
  - C. The lot number must be distinctly marked with a sign attached to a tree at the front of the lot.
3. **APPLICATION:** Complete the *Site Evaluation Application* and submit the application along with the appropriate Township fee to the address listed above. All checks should be made payable to "Penn Forest Township." Provide a copy of the survey plot plan for the property, if available.

The typical application fee for a residential individual septic system includes up to four (4) test pits and one (1) 6-hole percolation test, and the Township's administration fee.

4. **EXCAVATOR:** It is the applicant's responsibility to hire a consultant/excavator to do the digging for the test holes. After submitting the application, the applicant should have their excavator contact the Township to provide the PA One Call Number\* and to schedule the testing.

\*PA One Call Systems, Inc., please call 1-800-242-1776 to notify of digging to be done on property. The operator will provide you with a serial number. This number must be provided when scheduling the digging and/or testing.

5. **TEST PIT:** The test area must be cleared and have a safe access path. The test pits must be dug so that the Sewage Enforcement Officer (SEO) can easily climb in and out. Preferably, the excavator should schedule for the SEO to be at the site when the pits are dug.

Upon successful completion of the test pits, the excavator must immediately close the test pits. The SEO will identify the locations where the percolation holes are to be dug and instruct the applicant and/or their consultant/excavator on the depth that the percolation holes need to be dug.

6. **PERCOLATION TEST:** When the consultant/excavator prepares the site for the percolation test, it must be done in a manner consistent with Chapter 73.15 of the sewage facilities act, in addition to the items listed below:
  - A. The test pits must be CLOSED.
  - B. The proposed percolation test area must be a minimum of 20' x 40' (800 S.F.) and cleared of all brush.
  - C. The percolation holes must be dug to the correct depth and be six to eight inches in diameter.
  - D. One of the percolation test holes must be within ten feet of the test pits and the entire percolation site must encompass a minimum of 800 S.F.
  - E. DEP-approved coarse sand or gravel must be at the testing site. Provide enough stone to fill each hole two inches. Stone should be placed in a bag or bucket at the test site.
  - F. A minimum of seventy (70) gallons of water must be present and should be located no more than ten feet from the percolation testing area. The water must be in an open top container.

**Please note that wet and/or frozen weather conditions may delay testing.**

7. **TEST RESULTS:** When the percolation test is complete, the applicant and/or agent will receive written notice of the test results in the form of a suitability letter. Upon receipt of this letter, the applicant should contact a septic system designer and have them complete the necessary septic system design for the property.
8. **DESIGN:** At a minimum, the sewage system design must include the following:

ELEVATION OF THE CORNERS OF THE ABSORPTION BED \* SLOPE & DIRECTION \* ESTABLISHED BENCHMARK \* ALL ISOLATION DISTANCES FROM WELLS PROPOSED AND/OR EXISTING ON ADJOINING LOTS \* EXISTING/PROPOSED WELL LOCATION(S) ON DESIGNING LOT \* PROPERTY BOUNDARIES IN RELATION TO THE SYSTEM \* DRIVEWAY, BUILDINGS, ADJACENT ROADWAY LOCATIONS AND REFERENCE TO NORTH MUST BE SHOWN \* TEST PIT AND PERCOLATION TEST HOLE LOCATIONS MUST BE PINPOINTED \* THE SEWAGE ABSORPTION AREA MUST BE LOCATED NO FURTHER THAN TEN (10) FEET FROM THE TEST PIT AND MUST COVER THE PERCOLATION TEST HOLES \* PROPOSED PIPING LAYOUT AND TANK LOCATION(S) MUST BE SHOWN \* DRAINFIELD AND WELL LOCATIONS MUST BE STAKED ACCURATELY ON THE PROPERTY WITH LABELED DURABLE STAKES, E.G., WOOD, STEEL, ETC.

***NOTE: High water consumption devices, whirlpools, garbage disposals, seasonal rentals, large numbers of people, incorrect reporting of the number of bedrooms, etc., can and will lead to system malfunction. It is important to take these situations into account to ensure that your system is sized correctly.***

#### **SEPTIC PERMITTING:**

Obtain a copy of the *Application for an Onlot Sewage Disposal System Permit (Form 3800-FM-WSFRO290)* from Penn Forest Township. Submit four (4) copies of the septic system design to the Township along with the appropriate Township fee for review. Upon approval, the sewage permit will be issued. The permit is valid for three (3) years from the issuance date.

#### **VERIFICATION OF PRIOR TESTING:**

If a design and permit application is submitted six (6) years or more after the date of the original testing, the Township's SEO will need to verify the testing to confirm that it still conforms with the regulations and that the site has not been disturbed rendering the original testing unusable. The test locations and site features specified under #8 (above) must be staked out on the property prior to the verification.

The cost for this verification is typically included in the standard application fee. However, if a verification is requested as a stand-alone service to be performed for due-diligence purposes, the Township's fee to verify the prior testing is \$150.00.

#### **RENEWAL OF SEWAGE PERMITS:**

Approved sewage permits are only valid for three years. If the system was not constructed during the initial three-year period, the original applicant may apply for a one-time renewal of the sewage permit for an additional three years. Please contact the SEO prior to the expiration of the current permit to coordinate renewal and confirm the required fees. Depending on the age of the testing, a verification of prior testing may be required (see above). If the system is still not constructed within the subsequent three-year permitting period, the applicant would be responsible to apply for a new permit and provide fees equivalent to a new application.

#### **TRANSFER OF SEWAGE PERMIT:**

If you hold a valid sewage permit for a property that you are selling without having constructed the permitted system, please contact the SEO to coordinate transfer and confirm the required fees. A permit transfer does not extend the septic permit beyond the original expiration date.

**\* PERMITS ARE REQUIRED FOR BUILDING, ADDITIONS, OR REPAIRS TO A SEPTIC SYSTEM \***  
Please contact Penn Forest Township @ (570) 325-2769 for information and applications.

## **INSPECTIONS REQUIRED DURING THE INSTALLATION OF A SEPTIC SYSTEM**

The Applicant or their Contractor shall notify the SEO at least 72 hours prior to the start of system installation to arrange an inspection schedule. The Applicant or their Contractor shall notify the Township's SEO of any changes or modifications to the scope of the project or the design. These changes may warrant a permit modification, which may involve additional soils testing and/or coordination with your designer.

**The appropriate installation inspection fees must be paid to the Township before the SEO will perform the required inspections. Certificate of Occupancy permits cannot be issued by the Building Inspector unless these inspections are confirmed by the SEO.**

**Please call the Township to schedule an inspection. You will need to provide the Lot number, Section, Development, 911 address, type of inspection along with the contractor's name and phone number.**

### **ELEVATED SAND MOUND OR ELEVATED SAND TRENCH SYSTEMS (Pressure Dosed):**

1. **Chisel/Scarification Inspection:** after the area beneath the system, including the berm, has been scarified.
2. **Sand Inspection:** after the DEP-approved sand is in place. A sand certificate is required and should be given to the SEO during the pressure inspection. \*Random sand sample(s) may be obtained at the discretion of the SEO.
3. **Pressure Inspection:** after the tanks, pump, aggregate, piping, and berm are in place. All tanks and piping must remain uncovered until this inspection is completed.
4. **Final Inspection:** must be scheduled after the system has been covered with the required depth of final cover materials and before the builder calls for the final building inspection.
  - 4.a. Lateral cleanouts must be installed, if they are not already required by the sewage permit.
  - 4.b. Pump and alarms are to be operational and permanently wired to the circuit panel on separate circuits.

### **IN-GROUND BED/TRENCH SEPTIC SYSTEMS (Gravity & Pressure Dosed):**

1. **In-ground Inspection:** after the bed or trenches have been excavated and prior to placement of stone.
2. **Pressure Inspection:** (if applicable) after the tanks, pump, aggregate, and piping are in place. All tanks and piping must remain uncovered until this inspection is completed.
3. **Final Cover Inspection:** needs to be scheduled after the system has been covered with the required depth of final cover materials and before the builder calls for the final building inspection.

*\*A callback fee (\$100.00 per occurrence) will be charged if additional inspections are necessary due to improperly installed system components.\**