

INFORMATION FOR PROPERTY OWNERS REGARDING ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS

Onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) are a fact of life for people who live in the country or in unincorporated areas. Since most of us are city dwellers, we have the attitude of “flush and forget.” People who purchase or build a house in the country often do not realize what is involved with being a rural homeowner, particularly concerning sewage wastewater. Nonetheless, the Johnson County Code of Health Regulations OWTS ordinance (effective April 9, 2006) and State law RSMo 701.025-701.059 prohibits discharge of sewage onto the ground surface, into waterways, lakes or ponds (other than lagoons) or off the property that it serves.

Construction of new OWTS and major modification to existing systems requires an application fee, construction permit and approval from the Johnson County Community Health Services (JCCHS) for single-family residences, multifamily units, places of assembly (churches) and commercial buildings (automotive garages, restaurants, daycares, and other businesses). The permit may be obtained via the JCCHS or Missouri Department of Natural Resources (MDNR). The MDNR permits facilities that have greater than three thousand gallons of wastewater daily flow or that produce other than “basically domestic” wastewater. In addition, the MDNR regulates all above ground OWTS (lagoons) for properties other than single-family residences. On August 28, 2004, RSMo 701.031 was amended and now states Any person installing OWTS shall be registered to do so by the department of health and senior services. The Johnson County Code of Health Regulations also requires DHSS registered installers to be licensed with JCCHS.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Missouri Law allowed aerobic treatment units (ATUs) for single-family residences to discharge directly to the ground surface or waterway. Unfortunately, maintenance of these systems fell by the wayside and water pollution became a concern; therefore, the law was revised to its current status. If your home has a discharging ATU then it should be constructed with a soil absorption field or approved secondary treatment system while meeting the current regulations.

Developers of subdivisions, mobile home parks, and campgrounds need to be aware of revised regulations governing the selection of OWTS and allowable lot sizes. On March 30, 1999, Missouri revised 10 CSR 20-6.030 (Disposal of Wastewater in Residential Housing Developments). Under the revised regulations, developments consisting of seven or more lots that are less than five (5) acres require the MDNR’s approval of the wastewater treatment system before home construction or the sale of any lots.

The design of an OWTS requires careful planning. The character of the soil and the contour or slope of the site must first be considered with a soil morphology or percolation test evaluation. A DHSS certified percolation tester or soil scientist should analyze the soil properties, which are critical in determining the appropriate design of the OWTS. **Soil morphology evaluations are preferred over percolation tests because they provide more information for system design; furthermore, if the percolation test results are poor a soil morphology evaluation will often be required adding an unnecessary cost to the homeowner.** Much of the soil in Johnson County is unsuitable for conventional soil absorption systems. Where conventional soil absorption systems and lagoons are not suitable, a registered engineer must design the OWTS.

If you have any questions regarding the OWTS permitted facilities call Johnson County Community Health Services at (660) 747-6121 or reach us online at www.johnsoncountyhealth.org . For information regarding the MDNR permitted facilities call the Technical Assistance Program at (800) 361-4827 or the MDNR Kansas City Regional Office at (816) 622-7000.

PROCEDURE FOR PERMITTING AN ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM

**Installer or Property Owner Obtain OWTS Permit Application and Fee Form
from Johnson County Community Health Services (JCCHS)**

Property Owner Submits Application Permit Fee Form with \$125 Fee to JCCHS

**Installer or Property Owner Contracts Soil Morphology Evaluation or Percolation Test
in Area of Proposed OWTS**

Conventional or Engineered OWTS Designed

**Installer or Property Owner Returns
Completed Application to JCCHS**

Completed Application is Approved by JCCHS

**Installer Flags or Marks OWTS Layout
and Notifies (800) DIG-RITE**

**JCCHS Performs Site Evaluation
and Issues Construction Permit**

**Installer Notifies JCCHS of Construction Dates
24-Hours in Advance**

**OWTS Installed and System Components
Remain Open Until JCCHS Approval
and/or Final Inspection**