

# How to Obtain an On-Site Wastewater Treatment System Permit

## STEPS

This is a brief list of the steps necessary to complete the permit process. More information on each step is below.

1. Application for the permit
2. Optional preliminary site evaluation (this step is required for lots less than one acre).
3. Soil evaluation
4. System design by engineer, designer or owner (see below for details on who can design systems)
5. Design approval by SJBPH
6. Installation of system by licensed System Contractor
7. System inspection by SJBPH and designer/engineer
8. Final inspection and certification letter
9. Final permit issued

## APPLICATION

An application for an On-site Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) permit must be completed clearly and accurately since this will be a legal document and part of a permanent record. This can be done at either of the San Juan Basin Public Health (SJBPH) locations, or online at [www.sjbpublichealth.org/septic](http://www.sjbpublichealth.org/septic) (email us the completed form with signature). OWTS Permit Application fees are:

- New system permit **\$1023**
- Alteration OWTS permit **\$973**
- Minor Repair OWTS permit **\$373**

The Assessor's Parcel number (12-digit number found on Property Tax Notice or Notice of Value), the site address (to be provided by the County Building Department), and the lot size are required to complete the Application. Owners or agents with Power of Attorney are required to sign the application.

**Every OWTS Permit Application must be accompanied by a Lot Layout** that includes: **1)** Property boundaries, adjacent street(s), driveways, and parking area(s) **2)** Existing and proposed buildings, easements, & buried utilities **3)** Existing and proposed water wells **4)** Existing and proposed septic tank and drain-field locations (including existing lagoons) **AND 5)** Any springs, surface water, ditches, and steep slopes.

Note: A boundary outline map (from GIS), a Certificate of Survey copy, Improvement Location Certificate, Assessors Plat, or hand-drawn map with surface features and approximate distances are usually acceptable. SJBPH may waive the requirement to submit a Lot Layout if SJBPH has an existing site plan on the property associated with an existing permit.

**As of January 27, 2003, OWTS Permits for lagoons will not be issued.** This includes altering the size of an existing lagoon. For requests to add bedrooms to existing lagoon systems, contact SJBPH directly at 970-335-2032.

## OPTIONAL SITE EVALUATION

To determine the suitability of a proposed home site for an OWTS, a site evaluation or site visit by an Environmental Health Specialist can be requested by calling 970-335-2052. It is SJBPH policy to perform these preliminary site evaluations for lots smaller than one acre. The cost of a preliminary site evaluation **(\$240)**, if paid separately, will be deducted from your permit application fee.

## SOIL TEST

A soil test must be performed to identify the treatment capabilities of the soil and to adequately size the system. At least two eight-foot-deep pits will be dug around the area where the field will be constructed, and your engineer or a competent technician (defined in our regulations) will examine these to identify soil types. This soil test is also one factor in determining if an engineer is necessary to submit the design.

## SYSTEM DESIGN

Septic systems may need to be designed by a Professional Engineer (PE) when adverse site conditions such as fast or slow percolating soil, high seasonal ground water, shallow bedrock, steep slopes, small lots or setback complications are encountered. If an engineer is not necessary, you can contact us for more information on drawing your plans, though you are welcome to still contract with a PE.

## DESIGN APPROVAL

Once the design is sent to SJBPH, we review it to be sure it meets all regulations. Once the design has been approved, an "Authorization to Construct" will be issued specifying details of the OWTS being installed and any notes to the installer. The licensed System Contractor can then begin installing your system.

## INSTALLATION BY LICENSED SYSTEM CONTRACTOR

SJBPH OWTS Regulations require that the OWTS installer possess a current SJBPH System Contractor's License. Property owners who wish to install their own OWTS can obtain a License by taking our installer's class. The class is offered quarterly, and the cost is \$120. If this is of interest to you, please contact the SJBPH Environmental Health Office for scheduling. The Licensed System Contractor needs to coordinate with their PE/designer and SJBPH (as appropriate) throughout the entire installation process. If you are installing and have questions about the plans or requirements, call the EH office for assistance.

## SYSTEM INSPECTION (before backfill)

When construction of the OWTS is complete, but not yet backfilled, the Licensed System Contractor or property owner must contact their PE/designer and SJBPH to request a final inspection. **This request must be made at least 2 full working days in advance of the expected/desired inspection date.**

## FINAL INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION

After the system passes the inspection, it can be covered and the ground graded as noted in the design. Once complete, the PE/designer will perform a final inspection and send: **1)** a letter certifying that the system was installed properly **2)** final photos **and 3)** a final site plan showing dimensions and setbacks.

## FINAL PERMIT ISSUANCE

SJBPH will review the final certification letter and photos, as well as all the other documentation on the system. If everything complies, a final permit will be issued.