

Jefferson County Public Health – Report Performance Measures 2009

ON SITE SEWAGE PROGRAMS (OSS)

MISSION: The mission of the Onsite Sewage Program is to minimize the threat of surface and ground water contamination from failing or improperly designed, installed or maintained onsite sewage systems.

GOALS FOR FY 2009:

1. Educate homeowners, builders, real estate personnel, banks, installers, designers and onsite system maintenance personnel in the proper operation and maintenance of onsite sewage systems.
2. Assure a high quality-monitoring program.
3. Implement and enforce state and local rules and regulations governing the installation and use of onsite sewage systems.
4. Investigate action requests and complaints in a timely manner to reduce the threat of human contact with untreated wastewater.
5. Complete all state funded grant activities on-time and on-budget.
6. Assure high quality customer service.

OBJECTIVES FOR FY 2009:

1. Develop written informational materials for public distribution and conduct workshops for community groups addressing onsite sewage system operation and maintenance.
2. Provide training to community groups to increase awareness of regulatory requirements for onsite sewage systems.
3. Review monitoring and inspection reports and provide timely follow up.
4. Utilize existing data systems to track action requests and complaints.
5. Assure that site inspections in response to permit applications are conducted within 14 days of receipt of application.

| PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: | 2006 Actual | 2007 Actual | 2008 Actual | 2009 To 12/31/09 | 2010 Anticipated/ proposed |
|--|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| Number of systems repaired/upgraded | 44 | 32 | 32 | 32 | 30 |
| Percent of system failures less than 5 years in use | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Number of complaints received | 57 | 47 | 42 | 43 | 50 |
| Number of complaints closed | 33 | 33 | 24 | 19 | 30 |
| Number of septic permit applications submitted ¹ | 467 | 372 | 231 | 169 | 175 |
| Number of evaluations of existing system (EES) | 701 | 597 | 295 | 255 | 260 |
| Percent of existing systems receiving regular 3 rd party monitoring. ² | 5.2% | 4.4% | 2.2% | 1.8% | 2% |
| # of previously unknown systems having a monitoring inspection | 30 | 21 | 15 | 9 | 10 |
| Percent of monitoring inspections resulting in some maintenance needed. | 33% | 37% | 29% | 28% | 30% |
| Percent of EES resulting in required significant maintenance or repair. | 12.3% | 6.7% | 12.5% | 16% | 15% |
| Percent of failures/major maintenance | <2% | <2% | <2% | <2% | <2% |
| Number of educational workshops | | | 6 | 5 | 10 |
| Number of workshop participants | | | 239 | 102 | 250 |

¹Number of applications does not equal approved permits

² Based on estimated 13,500 systems in the County (from the Local Sewage Management Plan)

SUMMARY OF KEY FUNDING/SERVICE ISSUES: Tracking will be done with existing data systems to evaluate effectiveness of monitoring programs. Ongoing O&M activities will need to be funded through permit and inspections fees as well as the newly formed Clean Water District. Implementation will focus on coordination with the private contractors to set up systems for scheduling and tracking inspection activities and conducting community outreach to increase awareness of the new requirements.

LINKS TO COUNTY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES:

- Protecting and enhancing water quality and shellfish resources.
- Preventing exposures to disease causing organisms via water and food.
- Addressing locally identified and defined public health problems.
- Operating within a business plan based on sustainable resources, measured performance, and outstanding customer service.

2009 STUDY/ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

- Scanning existing septic case records and make these available on the County website was substantially completed. These are useful for homeowners, buyers, Designers, O&M Specialists, real estate professionals and others. As of September 28, 2009 all records from 1969 – 2005 that are in our data base are available on the web to the public. Approximately 500 additional paper records were researched and added to the database and scanned for public access. Over 11,100 cases. We are now working on the remaining paper files, 1,000-1,500 records.
- Classes to provide information on taking care of your septic system continue to be provided and are very well received in the community. They also provide an opportunity to inform homeowners about funds that are available to repair or upgrade a substandard or failing system. Additionally we share information about efforts to identify water quality problems and correct them. Work is coordinated with the Water Quality Team and the work they do on sanitary surveys in communities.
- Applications for septic permits continue to be down substantially after a three year period of increased applications. We are at about 50% of the years 2003-2007. Staffing reflects this. Currently approximately 1.25 staff is assigned to the onsite sewage program and 1 to the O&M program. All applications for development are down reflecting the economic downturn we are experiencing.
- A detailed review of applications for repair permits verified no system failures (other than electrical controls) on systems less than 5 years in use. This may reflect our continued work with designers and installers to assure adequate design review and approval along with installation inspections by the designer and health department staff.
- Review of the complaint/action request cases identified two issues. 1) data entry to provide current case status is inadequate and 2) many complaints take an extended period to resolve. During 2008 a new case type was developed for Violations. This will assist in clarifying when a complaint is confirmed to be an actual violation of code and will provide stronger tracking of the cases that have the highest risk for creating a public health hazard. Work on the development and use of the Violation case is ongoing.
- The decrease in the number of monitoring inspections continues.
- The percentage of systems monitored where some problem was identified and some maintenance was needed was 28%. Some sites required more than one item of maintenance and this percentage does not reflect whether multiple problems were identified. The percentage of systems that required significant maintenance or repair was up slightly and reflects a range of items such as electrical control malfunctions resulting in overflows/backups to leaking tanks to surfacing sewage and system failure. The number of system failure is very low at <2% of the total evaluated. All cases where significant maintenance is required receive written notification and most result in prompt response to correct the problem including application for permits where required (such as tank replacement).
- Consistent with our Local Sewage Management Plan we are documenting identification of systems that were not previously known and have no records. We estimate there to be between 1,000-1,500 of these cases. In addition to the monitoring inspections we are coordinating with the Water Quality Division to document sites where they are doing sanitary surveys where we have no records.