

Mendocino County Division of Environmental Health

Policy 4212.01

NON-STANDARD SEWAGE SYSTEM INSPECTIONS

Intent and Benefit

The intent and benefit of this new policy is to relieve the property owner/applicant of the redundancy and added cost of requiring the designer to perform construction inspections and certification of Non-Standards Systems.

There is an additional cost to having the designer return to the property during the construction process. And there is a cost associated with requiring the contractor coordinate with the designer as well as the inspector instead of simply the usual inspection request. This policy change will reduce costs for the applicant.

This policy attempts to streamline the inspection process for typical residential Non-Standard Sewage Systems making it similar to Standard System inspection process and thus saving time for the contractor and containing cost for the applicant.

Background

When non-standard sewage systems were first introduced in the early 1980's there was a general consensus that the engineer responsible for the design and the hydraulic calculations needed to be present during construction. This requirement was to assure that the proper materials and equipment were used and placement was according to the design.

Since the 1980's DEH staff have seen hundreds of residential non-standard sewage systems of various kinds proposed, reviewed, approved, installed and inspected. Most DEH staff have attended seminars and workshops, either out-of-town or in-house, covering the design, installation and inspection of various non-standard systems. Some DEH staff have designed their own non-standard sewage systems for repairs. In general, DEH staff are comfortable with their understanding of the critical control points of inspection for the various non-standard sewage system types. The department has specific inspection procedures today for each of the various standard and non-standard sewage systems.

Many of these non-standard systems are very similar. Familiarity with one type of system gives DEH staff familiarity with many others. Most of the modern non-standard sewage systems are less complex than the early non-standard sewage systems, i.e. Wisconsin Sand Mounds and Intermittent Sand Filters.

Statement of Problem

It no longer makes sense for both the designer and the county inspector to be present at what has become routine inspection of typical residential non-standard sewage systems. It adds unnecessary cost to the project for DEH to continue to require the presence of the designer. It also puts a burden on the contractor, and thus added costs for the applicant, to coordinate two inspectors.

DEH is sensitive to maintaining outdated or creating additional costs for applicants above that which is necessary in order to achieve compliance with state mandated minimum criteria.

Implementation

It is the policy of DEH to discontinue the routine practice of requiring the designer to inspect and certify the construction of typical residential non-standard sewage systems.

Designers may continue to inspect if they choose but it will no longer be a requirement of DEH forcing such redundant inspections.

Exceptions will occur where, due to the innovative, atypical design or the extended size of the project, DEH may require the designer to inspect the construction and certify that the construction is in compliance with the plans and specifications. In those instances, DEH will contact the designer and discuss the potential need for the designer's involvement. If the decision is that designer's inspections are necessary, then the designer's inspection items and the associated schedule will be required and attached as a condition or requirement of the permit.

Effective Date: 8/91

Revised Date: April 2002

Notes: Supersedes Policy # 42.43 dated 8/91

Director's Initials: _____