

# Mendocino County Division of Environmental Health

## Policy 4222.02

### **ON-SITE SEWAGE SYSTEM RELOCATIONS**

#### **Intent and Benefit**

This policy is intended to clarify the Division of Environmental Health's policy on septic system relocations and repairs and the differences between them. This will improve the consistency of information the applicant receives from DEH staff persons. It also sets a standard that will better guide the applicant in his/her choices and better protect the environment and public health.

#### **Background**

Applicants who have purchased property with an existing septic system and structure on it often want to upgrade/repair their old existing septic system. The existing septic system may have shown no signs of failure. In some cases the repair is proposed in conjunction with a new and larger structure in a new location on the property. The existence of an older septic system and some structure with historical use implies to some people a vested right. That right includes the ability to repair the septic system.

#### **Statement of Problem**

When is a repair truly a repair? When is a new, sometimes expanded structure, subject to all the same Basin Plan criteria as new development? DEH staff has questioned the legitimacy of requests for a septic system repair permit for completely new structures that are often larger and sometimes involve a change from residential to commercial use. These new structures are occasionally remotely located from the existing septic system that was not in failure in the first place, but was inadequate for the proposed new use of the property. Can these situations truly be defined as a repair and thus subject to the lesser standard? Or should these new structures and new uses be subject to the Basin Plan criteria for new development?

#### **Implementation**

Since repairs to existing systems for existing structures are subject to lesser standards, it is inappropriate to apply the repair standard to what is essentially a new system for a new use. New uses or significantly expanded structures (more than 150 gpd or high strength waste) shall utilize septic system designs which are in conformance with current Basin Plan criteria. Nothing in this policy shall prevent the replacement-in-kind of a structure from utilizing the existing septic system, e.g. new 2 bedroom home for an older 2 bedroom home.

Effective Date:

Revised Date:

Director's Initials: \_\_\_\_\_