

CHAPTER 7. OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE GUIDANCE FOR ALTERNATIVE SYSTEMS

7.1 Extended Treatment Package System Operation and Maintenance

Operation and maintenance tasks must follow those recommended by the manufacturer."

7.2 Lagoon Operation and Maintenance

The lagoon must be kept filled with at least two (2) feet of liquid. A supply of make-up water" shall be available. If the water comes from a well or domestic water supply, an approved" backflow prevention device must be installed between the water source and the discharge to the" lagoon."

Embankments must be stable and maintained so as to avoid breach, overflow, aesthetic nuisance," or disturbance to the lagoon operation. Permanent vegetation shall be maintained on the top and" the outer slopes of the embankment except where a foot or vehicle path is in use. Grasses should" be mowed."

Weeds and other vegetation must not be allowed to grow in the lagoon."

Duckweed or other floating aquatic weeds must be physically removed when the vegetation" obscures the surface of the liquid."

The fence and all gates must be maintained to exclude animals, children and other unwanted" intrusion."

7.3 Sand Filter Operation and Maintenance

Operations and maintenance tasks for sand filters should be specified on the permit."

Conventional sand filters, or sand filters of comparable O&M are the responsibility of the system" owner."

Permits may not be issued for a sand filter which, in the judgment of the Director, would require" O&M significantly greater than that of conventional sand filters, unless arrangements for system" O&M meeting the Director's approval are secured. Filters with special approvals should be" inspected every twelve (12) months and checked for necessary corrective maintenance."

The owner of any sand filter system must provide the Department written verification that the" system's septic tank has been pumped annually from the date of installation by an approved" septic tank pumping business."

The service start date shall be assumed as the date of installation."

The owner must provide the Director certification of tank pumping within two (2) months of the" date required for pumping."

7.4 Sand Mound Operation and Maintenance

The Director may require that a management entity be responsible for sand mound operation and maintenance. Such independent management is particularly important for large systems, that is systems with more than nine (9) connections or more than 2,500 gallons of sewage per day. Refer in the Alternative System Section to guidelines for “Non-profit Corporations for Managing Small or Subsurface Wastewater Flow Systems.”

The Director may require that operation and maintenance records, including results of ground water and system test results, be submitted annually.

Alarm systems should be inspected monthly for proper operation.

Sludge depth in the septic tank should be checked annually and the tank shall be pumped when the sludge exceeds forty (40) percent of the liquid depth.

The mound must be maintained free of vehicular traffic, livestock and other compactive or disruptive activity. The toe area of the mound is extremely sensitive to compaction and must particularly be protected. The maintenance of grasses and shallow-rooted perennials on the mound is recommended.

7.5 Open Sewage Complaint Investigation Protocol

Record pertinent information from complainant to conduct an initial investigation (Name, address and phone number of property owner and complainant, and the nature of the complaint). Health District staff will investigate open sewage complaints stemming from subsurface sewage disposal systems. DEQ will investigate open sewage complaints regarding public wastewater treatment systems (collection, pumping or treatment, etc).

Gather the following equipment and prepare for investigation:

- Camera, film and batteries
- Dye, tablets or liquid
- Notify lab of possibility for coliform density tests
- Sample bottles, whirl packs, sterilized equipment, lab sample forms.
- Ice chest and ice
- Disposable gloves

Go to property, notify owners of complaint and conduct complaint investigation. If complaint is unfounded notify complainant of findings. If open sewage complaint is valid:

1. Take pictures of any open sewage or evidence of wastewater.
2. Dye trace household plumbing if necessary to identify wastewater discharge location.
3. Collect samples of sewage.
4. Collect samples of surface water if direct discharge to water.
5. Place samples in ice chest and transport to laboratory.
6. Post primary and secondary contact recreational waters with open sewage notice until water sample results can be obtained.
7. Issue "Notice of Violation" (NOV) to property owner or send notice via certified mail. Establish time frames for obtaining a replacement system permit (7 days), for system installation (30 days) and any corrective actions necessary to mitigate the public health hazard of the open sewage (items #8 and #9, immediate action). Carbon copy county prosecutor with NOV letter.
8. Require septic tank(s) to be pumped on a daily basis, if necessary, with documentation sent to health district office.
9. Require open sewage to be covered with soil. If property owner is unable to cover sewage with soil require owner to spread lime on top of open sewage.
10. Track property owner activity regarding compliance with NOV and any issued permit.
11. Failure to comply with NOV: file complaint with county prosecutor and ask prosecutor to issue a citation against property owner. Prepare case for court hearing.
12. Follow court's judgement, or hearing findings.

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