

Operation & Maintenance (O&M) Inspection v.s. Evaluation on Existing System

O&M Inspection

This inspection is completed by a 3rd party contractor who is licensed by Pacific County to conduct these inspections. During this inspection, the contractor will locate all of the system components and provide the County with a detailed drawing of the system location. They will also check all components for functionality and make notes on any issues that the system has. Additionally, they will measure sludge and scum levels and determine whether or not the tank should be pumped. The primary reason for this inspection requirement is to disclose any deficiencies to potential buyers and to notify the County of any failed systems. As per Pacific County Board of Health Ordinance 3E, Section 23.7 “At the time of, or prior to, property transfer, the owner of record (seller) shall provide to the buyer, OSS maintenance records (if available), and a completed OSS inspection report prepared by a County licensed Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Specialist”. Therefore, all properties that are sold that have an on-site septic system must have this inspection completed at, or prior to, the time of sale, NO EXCEPTIONS. O&M inspections for time of sale are valid for one (1) year.

Evaluation on Existing System

This evaluation is completed by a Pacific County Environmental Health Specialist. During the evaluation, the EHS will conduct a complete evaluation of the site and the system and compare it to current regulations. This includes a complete soil evaluation, determination of existing vertical and horizontal separations for the existing system, system size, setbacks, etc. This evaluation is only required when an applicant wants to gain approval to connect an abandoned system (any system more than 6 years old and not connected to a structure) to a structure. In order to connect an abandoned system to a structure, the system must meet all current regulations as if it was a new system. The evaluation will determine if the system does meet these requirements and if not, what upgrades are necessary to bring it up to code. Unfortunately, some systems cannot be brought up to code and would have to be completely replaced before connection to a structure is approved. Additionally, there is no grandfathering of abandoned systems, so if the existing system does not meet current regulations and site conditions prohibit a new system from being installed to meet current regulations, then this lot can be denied placement of a new system and would be considered “unbuildable” (Pacific County Board of Health Resolution 2010-02). Abandoned systems can be used for RV’s unless they meet BOH Ordinance 3E’s definition of a failure. This evaluation is only required when an applicant wants approval to connect an abandoned system to a structure. A previous passing O&M inspection does not exempt a property from needing this evaluation prior to connection to a structure, nor does this evaluation meet BOH Ordinance 3E, Section 23.7 requirement that all properties have an O&M inspection. Evaluations of existing systems are valid for two (2) years.