



Defiance County General Health District

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www.defiancecohealth.org

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RE: Application to Operate a Sewage Treatment System

In 2007, the Ohio legislature passed laws requiring owners of Sewage Treatment Systems (STS) to obtain operation permits. Some of the major points in the law:

- Sewage Treatment Systems (STS) commonly known as septic systems, in use prior to the law are considered approved. Existing systems do not need to be improved or replaced, unless it is to address a public health issue.
- Repairs are favored over replacements when addressing a public health issue.
- Each owner of an STS must obtain an operation permit from the local health district.

In 2015, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) adopted rules setting up the regulation for local health districts (Ohio Administrative Code (OAC): Chapter 3701-29). In the Spring of 2019, the Defiance County Board of Health adopted the local regulation directing how the program would proceed and defined the operation permit terms and conditions. In adopting this regulation, the Defiance County General Health District (DCGHD) strived for a program that will:

- Reflect Community Values – there will be options for do-it-yourselfers.
- Allow Flexibility – different ways to show maintenance.
- Be Fair – create an equal playing field.
- Be Sustainable – allow adequate staffing for education and modernizing records.
- Be Effective – improve the longevity of systems and water quality.

One quarter of the County's approximate 6,200 systems will be brought into the program annually over four years. This letter is to inform you, that as the owner of an STS in Hicksville, Mark, or Tiffin township, you will need to apply for your operation permit by **June 30, 2021**. The order in which the townships were selected was based on an environmental risk assessment.

Elements of the program

- Operation permits are valid for four years. At some time during the four-year permit period, the property owner must have the tank pumped or an inspection done. Any records of tanks being pumped in the prior two years of the due date (June 30, 2019 or later) will also be accepted as service done within the permit period. Written documentation from a registered septic hauler must be provided to the DCGHD.
- The permit does not require upgrades be made to a sewage treatment system. The system simply needs to function as originally intended. Owners with buried tanks may want to consider adding risers to lower the labor costs when their tank is pumped or inspected. Risers bring access to the tank to above grade so the tank can be easily located.
- If you have an aeration system, it needs to be made functional if it is not presently. This means all mechanical components must work and meet current code requirements. A registered Service Provider may be contacted to evaluate your system.
- Funds generated by the program can only be used to administer the program and provide education and outreach to STS owners. The permit fees are similar to those adopted by surrounding counties; the \$60.00 permit fee covers the four-year permit period.

Included with this letter is the Operation Permit application. Please complete and return the application with payment to the address on the letterhead by **June 30, 2021**. Once the payment and application are received, the DCGHD will mail an Operation Permit letter to the mailing address provided on the application, along with educational information on maintaining sewage treatment systems.

More Information

- Additional Information on the O&M program, including a list of registered contractors, is available at defiancecohealth.org/myseptic (if you do not have internet access, contact our office by phone for an updated list of septic haulers & service providers).
- You may request a copy of septic records for your property by filling out the request form at defiancecohealth.org/myseptic
- If you believe you have received this mailing in error, or are not the current property owner, please contact DCGHD. Make sure to include the referenced address and a contact number.
- If there is no STS at the property listed, complete the contact section of the form and check the “No Sewage Treatment System or tank at this site” box. Return by mail, drop off at our office, or scan/email and department staff will contact you to confirm this information.
- **Only the application and fee must be submitted by June 30, 2021.** This achieves a “Pending” permit status. Additional requirements (such as pumping, inspection, or maintenance as necessary) must be **completed before the end of the four-year permit period**—June 30, 2025.
- If you feel you cannot pay the entire amount, contact the department at the above address or phone to ask about a payment plan.
- Please contact DCGHD staff by email at myseptic@defiancecohealth.org or by phone at 419-784-3818 with any questions you may have about how to complete the application.

Be on the lookout for STS Killers

1. **Roots** can clog drain lines and break septic tanks in half. Even roots from distant trees and plants will seek moisture around leaking septic tanks and drain fields. While unnoticed at first, they can quickly lead to catastrophic failure. Owners can ensure that roots are not becoming a problem by having tanks cleaned and inspected on a regular basis and by locating drain lines before planting trees.
2. **Driving vehicles over the tank or leach field areas.** The heavier the vehicle the worse the damage, but we have seen cases where something as small as a dirt bike created damage. Vehicle traffic compacts soil, which prevents dispersal of wastewater and can eventually crush tile laterals. Lids and inspection ports can also be damaged allowing damage by wildlife. Before you allow vehicle traffic on your property, find out where your system is at and steer traffic around it.
3. **Failure to follow the recommended pump frequency** for the tank. The design of a tank allows the solids to settle to the bottom while the wastewater is clarified by bacteria. No miracle cleaner can effectively remove these solids; they must be pumped out. If the solids level gets too high, the tank no longer works as a tank. It acts more like a straight pipe dumping untreated sewage into the outlet tile or leach field clogging them both. Owners can add additional insurance against these discharges by installing an outlet filter on the tank. Filters are like inexpensive insurance (\$100-\$150) and have been required on new systems since 2007.
4. **Dirty or clogged outlet filters** can cause the outlet of a tank to be blocked. Filters prevent solids from exiting the tank. As mentioned above, filters protect the secondary treatment component of a septic system, however, if filters become clogged effluent (black water) cannot exit the tank. This causes the tank to be not drain properly and can cause sewage to back-up into the home, or around the tank.
5. **Oils, Grease and Chemicals** Most newer tanks can accommodate some levels of oils and grease, but older tanks and tanks full of solids cannot. They will pass through the tank and clog tiles and soil pores. It takes a very long time for oils and greases to break down naturally. Never dump oil, grease or greasy waste down the sink. Never dump paints, fuel, or solvents down the drain. Visit Defiance County Environmental Services website <https://www.defiance-county.com/environmental-services/index.php> or call 419-782-5442 for information on proper disposal of chemicals.