

IEHA Wastewater Management Committee  
Guidance Document  
Septic System Inspections – Subsurface Systems – 05/07/2004

This document is intended to provide guidance for Environmental Health Specialists, contractors, realtors, and other interested parties in making inspections of subsurface septic systems. It does not necessarily cover every possible situation that may be found, but should allow for a certain degree of accuracy and consistency throughout the inspection process.

A member of the local health department shall complete all inspections using a laser level (if available). The local health department is allowed two (2) days to perform the inspection, after proper notification. Items that should be inspected include:

I. Gravity Sewer

- A. Inspection starts two (2) feet outside the foundation.
- B. Must have a positive slope of not less than  $4''/25'$ , or greater than  $36''/25'$ .
- C. Gravity sewer pipe meets standards
- D. The “bells” of the pipe should be installed upstream.
- E. All connections should be cleaned, primed, and glued, or installed as per manufacturer’s specifications..
- F. Backfilled properly, compacted without aggregate or sand.

II. Septic Tanks

- A. Tanks must be from an approved source.
- B. Sufficient distance from the house to the tank.
- C. Tank set level, and with the inlet upstream.
- D. The septic tank baffles are intact, or the sanitary “T” installed as per manufacturer’s specifications.
- E. Clean out plugs, risers, pipe connections, and weep holes sealed according to manufacturer’s specifications.

III. Effluent Sewers, From Septic Tank to Distribution Box or Dosing Tank.

- A. Effluent sewers installed with a positive slope
- B. Pipe standards met.
- C. Backfilled properly, compacted without aggregate.

IV. Dosing Tanks and Components

- A. Dose tank must be from an approved source.
- B. Dose tank must be installed level with the inlet baffle intact.
- C. Positive slope from septic tank to dosing tank.
- D. Pump properly sized and installed, including “quick disconnect” couplings.
- E. All electrical connections completed; alarm panel on a separate circuit, and tested.
- F. Weep hole sealed.
- G. Floats installed according to the approved design.
- H. Safety requirements met, and the riser secured.
- I. Pipe standards met and configured in a manner that permits drain back.

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### V. Distribution Boxes

- A. D-box meets minimum design specifications.
- B. D-box inlet installed “upstream”.
- C. D-box installed level, or equipped with leveling devices to insure that the effluent is evenly distributed.
- D. Inlet baffle properly installed.
- E. Two inches maximum of freeboard provided at outlet of baffle.
- F. D-box sealed as per manufacturer’s specifications.

### VI. Effluent Sewers from Distribution Box to Absorption Trenches.

- A. Effluent sewers installed with a positive slope
- B. Pipe standards met

### VII. Absorption Trenches

- A. Installed at the permitted depth, length, width, and separation
- B. Installed with permitted materials (aggregate, chambers, etc.)
- C. Correct number of trenches
- D. Pipes installed with the proper hole alignment
- E. Installed during conditions that preclude sidewall smearing
- F. Installed to address micro- relief and root balls in wooded areas

### VIII. Perimeter Drainage

- A. Installed at the prescribed invert elevations.
- B. Installed with the permitted tile, pipe standard and diameter
- C. Appropriate type of drainage installed [perimeter, upslope interceptor, or drain segment, aggregate installed appropriately, proper type of aggregate, etc.]
- D. Positive slope (at least  $2.4''/100' = 0.2'/100'$ ), and no humps or sags
- E. Installed at the appropriate separation distance from the absorption field
- F. Outlet installed at the prescribed depth
- G. Outlet pipe hardened and the rodent guard installed properly
- H. Subsurface tiles, and all connections made to them are to be inspected prior to backfilling

### IX. Miscellaneous

- A. All wells are located beyond the minimum separation distances prescribed by the rule.
- B. All other set back and separation distance requirements are met.
- C. Septic systems will be installed as per the plans that were submitted to the LHD, prior to the construction phase of the project. “As Built” plans are not preferred. The contractor should be held responsible for any “modifications” that occur, and provide drawings that reflect the changes, prior to the construction of the system. LHD’s should not be in the business of drawing up the systems as they were installed.
- D. Materials meet the minimum standards, as prescribed by the rule
- E. Underground Plant Protection (Holey Moley) should have been contacted prior to any construction of an OSS, and the appropriate documentation made available to the LHD. (1-800-382-5544)
- F. Appropriate documentation on all materials and equipment will be made available to the LHD, upon permit issuance.

These guidelines were produced under the auspices of the Wastewater Management Committee of the Indiana Environmental Health Association.