



FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) for LCHD's Sewage O&M Program

What is O&M? O&M stands for Operation and Maintenance. After a sewage treatment system (STS), often referred to as a “septic system,” is installed, there is a certain amount of management required to keep an STS working properly so that it does not pollute surface and underground water supplies such as streams, lakes and wells.

Why is this program being created now in Logan County? Although Logan County has had STS permits to install systems since the 1940s, on January 1, 2015, Ohio Department of Health (ODH), adopted the Sewage Treatment System Rules for the entire state of Ohio. These statewide requirements are now the minimum standards that all local health districts (LHDs) must follow regarding the treatment of private wastewater in Ohio, including Logan County. ODH will audit all LHDs to determine how their sewage programs in general, and their Sewage O&M Programs in particular, are being administered. In 2007, ODH began its first statewide sewage code, and LCHD started mailings for a new Logan County O&M Sewage Program. But within three months, ODH cancelled the rules due to its excessively restrictive requirements. LCHD also halted the O&M Program at that time. When ODH restarted a revised, statewide sewage code in 2015, again with an O&M requirement, LCHD waited to begin the program in Logan County to be sure the rules stayed in effect. They have remained, so an O&M Program was started again as a mandated program for Logan County.

When did Logan County's O&M program actually begin? Our present program was initiated by the Logan County Board of Health on January 1, 2019. Since that date all previous sewage operation permits became no longer valid if they were issued before January 1, 2015. Applications (often referred to as “\$50 bills”) for new sewage operation permits are presently being mailed out by township in which a property is located. After LCHD receives the completed sewage operation permit application and all applicable fees, LCHD assesses the STS and then mails a new sewage operation permit to the property owner.

What will be the costs to property owners with the O&M Program? A \$50 “renewable” sewage operation permit is now required. Additionally, a \$100 STS operation inspection or reinspection fee can be charged by the health district for any inspection conducted by the health district of an existing STS in order to administer the O&M Program.

What does “renewable” mean? Renewable means that operation permits will have expiration limits. This will require reapplying for and purchasing a new permit before it officially expires.

Is there a penalty if I don't pay? Failure to pay operation and/or inspection fees will result in an additional \$12.50 (25%) penalty fee. All unpaid fees will be added to the property owner's taxes.

What are the fees used for? All operation permit and inspection fees are used to only administer the O&M Program in Logan County. All fees stay in the county and nothing is forwarded to the state of Ohio. In addition to two new Environmental Technician positions created to help oversee the O&M Program and to coordinate the use of volunteers to reduce costs, regular staff time has been used to

create and maintain the new O&M Program’s computer databases and mailing lists; respond to O&M questions; review and record all service provider maintenance/repair reports and septage hauler pumping reports; assess information received to determine the types of existing sewage systems and the appropriate lengths of their new operation permits; inspect sewage systems when necessary to properly establish that each sewage installation permit is matched to the actual sewage system it was originally issued for; create new operation permits and renewal reminder notices; develop and maintain sewage system educational materials; support the general program costs of clerical staff time, copying supplies and postage; and to investigate sewage nuisance complaints to confirm that the county’s sewage systems are operating properly and do not create nuisance conditions.

Will the assessment let me know what type of sewage system I have? Yes, the assessment by the LCHD through a records search of the LCHD files will allow for all STSs to be identified and categorized into one of three (3) separate operation permit renewal and inspection requirement intervals (see Table 1 below).

Table 1. Inspection Requirement Intervals	
<i>The following are the inspection intervals for the various types of Sewage Treatment Systems (STSs).</i>	
Frequency Group (in order of risk, highest to lowest)	Requirement
A. Aerators, mechanical components (pumps and blowers), etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Regular Aerator ▪ NPDES Aerator ▪ Drip Distribution System ▪ Aerator to Leaching Trenches ▪ Aerator to Mound ▪ Aerator to SSF ▪ Aerator to Peat/Sphagnum Moss Filter ▪ Aerator to any other STS ▪ ST to SB2 ▪ ST to Mound ▪ ST to Lift Station to Mound ▪ ST to Lift Station to Leaching Trenches ▪ Lift Station to any other STS ▪ STS with sump pump in the perimeter drain ▪ Holding tank, privy vault, experimental or STS with time-limited variance Unknown STS (until STS is categorized by type)	One Inspection Per Annual Permit Cycle
B. Septic Tank (ST) to filter beds with OEPA NPDES permits, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ST to Subsurface Sand Filter (Discharging off lot) ▪ ST to Peat/Sphagnum Moss Filter (Discharging off lot) ▪ ST to Filter Bed (Discharging off lot) 	One Inspection per 5-Year Permit Cycle <u>Note: Clear water curtain drains are exempt.</u>
C. Septic Tank (ST) to leach field, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ST to leaching trenches ▪ ST to Filter Bed (Non-Discharging so wastewater stays on lot) ▪ GWRS ▪ ST to other gravity-only systems 	One Inspection per 10-year Permit Cycle

What if I have an old sewage system that is not up to the present code? If no “public health nuisance” or “system failure” is observed, then no other changes are required to the system. However, missing or damaged risers and/or inspection/sampling ports, which aid in the future maintenance and inspection of the system, can be required in order to renew an operation permit.

If my STS has “failed” due to it not draining properly or because it is creating a public health nuisance, how much time will I have to fix it? The LCHD will work with each property owner to create an

“incremental repair and/or replacement plan” to address the nuisance condition or system failure in a timely manner.

Is there any funding available to repair/replace “failed” sewage systems or to connect to public sanitary sewer? Yes, the Ohio EPA has made available to participating health districts up to \$150,000 per year to repair/replace improper sewage systems through their Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) grant program. Payment is based on income guidelines to determine eligibility for 50%, 85% and even 100% of the cost of repair, replacement or connection to sewer.

After the first round of assessments by the health district, will anyone else be allowed to conduct on-site sewage operation permit inspections? Yes, service providers such as septic tank cleaners/haulers, all STS installers, and even property owners themselves (but only for their own primary residences and after passing a sewage exam and registering) can conduct the operation permit inspections. However, if no arrangement is made by the property owner for an operation permit inspection to be completed during the permit cycle and before the permit is renewed, the LCHD will conduct an inspection and charge a fee of \$100.00.

I wish to sell my house so will I have to escrow money to cover the cost of a future replacement system? Only if a nuisance condition is observed or reported to the LCHD at the time of the sale, would an “incremental repair/replacement plan” have to be begun. Otherwise, such financial arrangements are strictly between the buyer and the seller.

If I sell my house, will the new owner have to purchase a new operation permit? No, once the operation permit is assigned to a sewage system the operation permit stays with the property. The operation permit would not have to be renewed by the new owner until it expires (which in some cases is annually unless the SST can be reassigned to a 5-year or 10-year permit).

EXAMPLE Scenario 1: As the property owner, I received an O&M application from LCHD. I knew that my home has a septic tank that flows to a sand filter bed, discharging off of my property. I completed and returned the application form, including the information I knew about my septic system and a \$50.00 payment to LCHD. I received an Operation Permit from LCHD, indicating that it is valid for 5 years. I will call a registered septage hauler and ask them to complete the required inspection before my operation permit expires in 5 years. *(Note that this is an example scenario and your STS may be different than the scenario described above.)*

EXAMPLE Scenario 2: As the property owner, I received an O&M application from LCHD. I knew that my home has a septic tank, but I didn’t know what happened to the wastewater after it left the house. I completed and returned the application form, including that I had no further information about my septic system and a \$50.00 payment to LCHD. I received an Operation Permit from LCHD, indicating that it is valid for 1 year due to LCHD determining that a pump chamber exists for my septic system. I will call a registered septage hauler and ask them to complete the required inspection before my permit expires. I will also provide LCHD with a copy of my service contract with a registered service provider. *(Note that this is an example scenario and your STS may be different than the scenario described above.)*

For any additional questions or comments, please contact Environmental Technician Mary Moser at mmoser@co.logan.oh.us or (937) 651-6208.

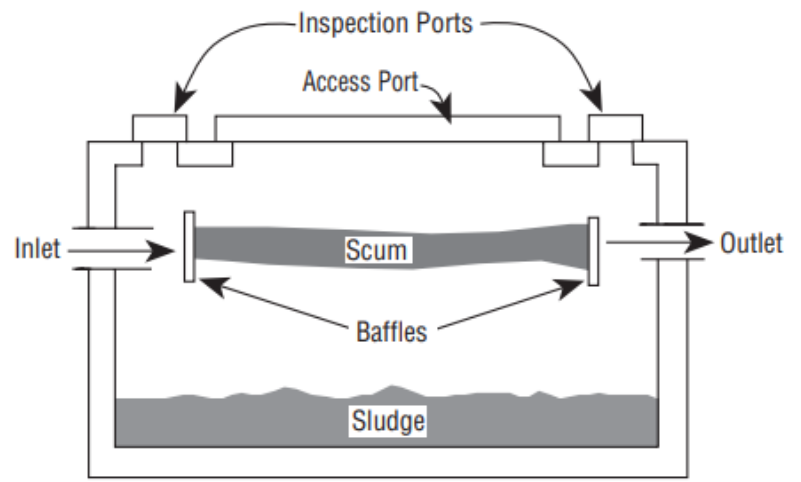
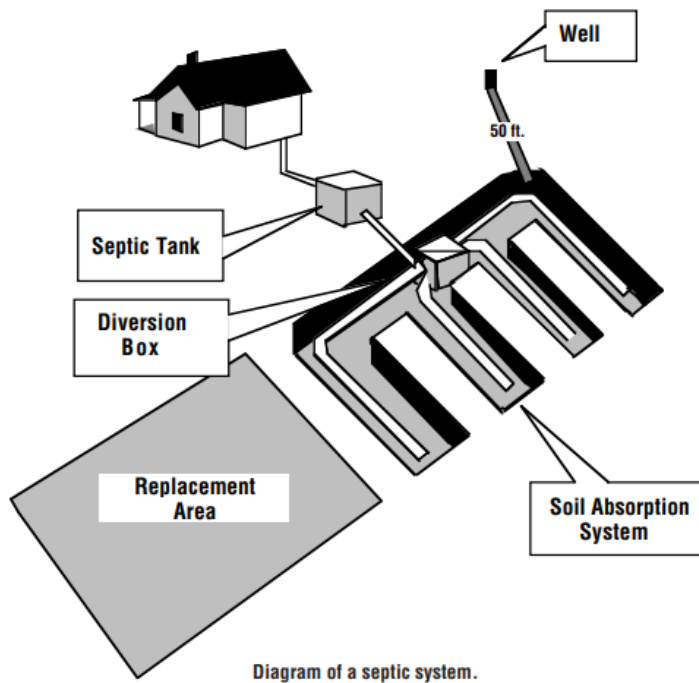


Table 1. Estimate Septic Tank Pumping Frequencies in Years (For Year-Round Residence)

Tank Size (gal)	Household Size (Number of People)									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
500	5.8	2.6	1.5	1.0	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1	—
750	9.1	4.2	2.6	1.8	1.3	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.4	0.3
1000	12.4	5.9	3.7	2.6	2.0	1.5	1.2	1.0	0.8	0.7
1250	15.6	7.5	4.8	3.4	2.6	2.0	1.7	1.4	1.2	1.0
1500	18.9	9.1	5.9	4.2	3.3	2.6	2.1	1.8	1.5	1.3
1750	22.1	10.7	6.9	5.0	3.9	3.1	2.6	2.2	1.9	1.6
2000	25.4	12.4	8.0	5.9	4.5	3.7	3.1	2.6	2.2	2.0
2250	28.6	14.0	9.1	6.7	5.2	4.2	3.5	3.0	2.6	2.3
2500	31.9	15.6	10.2	7.5	5.9	4.8	4.0	4.0	3.0	2.6

Note: More frequent pumping needed if garbage disposal is used.