



MASON COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES

Building, Planning, Environmental Health, Community Health

On-site Sewage and Disposal System Operation and Maintenance Report

(To be used only for Conventional Gravity, Conventional Pressure, Sandfilter, Sand-lined Drainfield, and Mound Systems)

Tax Parcel Number: _____

Property Address: _____

Following is a list of items that must be monitored and maintained to protect against failure of your on-site sewage system. A Mason County Septic System User's Manual is a good source of information about system systems. To request a Manual, please call us, or print a copy from the Public Health Web page at www.co.mason.wa.us. Inspection frequency is every three years for gravity and every year for all other system types. Please complete this form and return it to Mason County Public Health to meet maintenance requirements of WAC246-272A-0270.

Homeowners are allowed to inspect the following system types. Indicate your septic system type.

- Gravity Drainfield Pressure Drainfield Sandfilter Sand-lined Drainfield Mound

General- All Systems

- Yes No Components accessible for service?
- Yes No Surfacing effluent from any component? Any signs of ponding or discharge to surface?
- Yes No Is the area free from roads, structures, and vehicular traffic?
- Yes No Are the tank lids intact and secure?
- Yes No Any settling problems observed?
- Yes No Was the house/structure vacant or used infrequently, assessment of the drainfield not possible?
- Yes No Effluent level in tank(s) within operational limits?
- Yes No All required baffles intact?
- Yes No N/A For two compartment tanks, is the dividing wall intact?
- Yes No Were the sludge and scum measured as required for inspection? See back for instructions.
- Yes No Does the septic tank need to be pumped?
- Yes No Any root intrusion?
- Yes No N/A Is the effluent screen free of debris?
- Yes No Are downspouts diverted away from septic system and is area free of surface water drainage?
- Yes No Does your system have observation ports?
- Yes No N/A If yes, is there ponding of effluent observed in observation ports?

Pump Tanks

- Yes No Does the pump tank need to be pumped?
- Yes No Any electrical repairs needed?
- Yes No Is alarm mechanism functioning as intended?
- Yes No Were pump controls and floats tested and operational?

Comments: _____

Homeowner signature _____ Date _____

Homeowner name (please print) _____ Phone number _____

How to Determine if Your Septic Tank Needs to be Pumped

Step 1 — Measuring the Scum Level

This procedure determines the distance between the bottom of the scum layer and the bottom of the outlet baffle or tee.

1. Make a **scum stick** — Measuring sticks can be made of wood or PVC pipe. For a wood scum stick, attach a 6-inch long board to the end of a 6-foot long stick. For a PVC pipe stick glue a 90° elbow to one end of a 6-foot long $\frac{1}{2}$ " Schedule 40 PVC pipe. Cut a 6-inch piece of PVC pipe and glue to elbow. Place end caps on open ends.
2. Establish a convenient reference point, such as a stick laying across the riser hole or the top of the tank.
3. At the outlet end of your tank's **first** compartment, carefully push the stick through the scum layer to find the bottom of the crossover baffle or tee.
4. Mark the stick at the reference point to indicate the bottom of the baffle or tee.
5. Raise the stick until you feel or see the stick contact the bottom of the scum layer.
6. Mark the scum stick again at the reference point to indicate the bottom of the scum layer.
7. If the two marks are 3 inches or less apart, the tank needs to be pumped. If the top of the scum layer is within 1 inch of the top of the outlet baffle the tank needs to be pumped.

Step 2 — Measuring the Sludge Level

This procedure determines the distance from the bottom of the crossover baffle or tee to the top of the sludge layer.

1. Dig a hole through scum, piling the material on top of the floating mat – do not stain the sludge stick with scum.
2. Make a **sludge stick** — For a wood sludge stick, use a stick at least 6 feet long. For a PVC sludge stick, cut a 10-foot PVC pipe into two 5-foot sections. Glue an adapter to each stick. Screw a coupler into one of the adapters. Connect the two sections to make a 10-foot stick.
3. Tightly wrap three feet of a white rag or old towel around the bottom of the stick. Fasten it with duct tape, staple gun (for wood) or PVC glue (for pipe).
4. Carefully lower the stick to the bottom of the tank. Hold the stick in the tank for at least five minutes to allow sludge particles to adhere to the towel. Mark the stick at the reference point to indicate the bottom of the tank.
5. Carefully remove the stick. There should be a distinct dark stain on the rag. This is the depth of the sludge layer.
6. Lay the sludge stick beside the scum stick. Line up the top marks.
7. Measure the distance from the bottom of the scum stick to the top of the dark stain on the sludge stick.
8. If the distance is 12 inches or less, your tank needs to be pumped.



CAUTION:

NEVER enter a septic tank—fumes can be fatal!
NEVER leave an open tank unattended. Keep kids and pets away. Cover with a large board, if needed.

This document is adapted from a brochure produced by Thurston County Environmental Health.