



# TOWN OF OXFORD

## Board of Health

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### **PROPERTY OWNERS INSTRUCTIONS FOR PERC TEST APPLICATION & INSTALL NEW SEPTIC OR SEPTIC REPAIR**

The Board of Health would like to ensure that you as the property owner understand the procedures, timeframes and phases for the design, approval, installation, and certification of an On-Site Sewage Disposal System (Septic System). Please read this form carefully. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact this office.

#### **PERCOLATION AND SOILS EVALUATION TESTING PROCEDURES**

Application for percolation/soils evaluation testing must be filled out completely and submitted with appropriate fee to the Board of Health office prior to testing. This form shall include the name of the applicant, owner if different, street address, map and parcel number (available from the Assessor's office), the location of the proposed testing and the name of the Registered Professional Engineer, Registered Sanitarian, or other professional authorized by law who will be performing the test in the presence of the Board of Health Agent. Included with this application shall be the assessor's map showing the location of the testing with directions to the site (off road) etc. For large tract testing a copy of the proposed lots will be required. Utility pole number nearest lot may also be required. All documentation will be required prior to testing.

The Board of Health will issue a permit number for each application submitted. This number is required when scheduling testing with the Board of Health Agent. No testing will be scheduled without this number. The Engineer for the applicant requesting the testing shall contact the Board of Health Agent a minimum of seven (7) days prior to the requested date. Testing will be scheduled on a first come first served basis.

Percolation and soils evaluation tests may be made at any scheduled time during the year. However, an acceptable percolation test does not mean the lot is buildable.

Soils evaluation holes on single lots must be excavated prior to the Agent's arrival on site and are to be left open for inspection. Soils evaluation holes shall be excavated on the day of testing and not the day before.

At the time of testing, the Engineer performing the test will set a permanent benchmark and provide the Board of Health agent with elevations of each percolation and soils evaluation test performed. The Engineer shall also provide horizontal ties to all permanent landmarks, property corners, utility poles, etc. This includes failed tests and abandoned tests as well.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL REGULATIONS - TITLE 5**

For new construction only, the engineer will be required to place grade stakes in all soils evaluation holes. These stakes will be marked with the test number and date of testing. The stakes will serve to locate the testing at future dates. This is not a requirement for soils testing on septic system repairs.

For testing on large tracts of land or land not easily accessible, the Engineer performing the test will provide to the Board of Health within sixty (60) days of testing, but in any case prior to submitting design plans. The above information (elevations and ties) or the results will be considered null and void and a new application and fee will be required. This will also violate 310 CMR 15.018 which gives Soil Evaluators sixty (60) days to submit test information or face revocation of certification.

In areas of rock outcrops, ledge, or other areas comprised of less than four (4') feet of natural occurring pervious material, a minimum of four (4) soils evaluation holes will be required to ensure on-site suitability. The Board of Health Agent may require additional holes if necessary.

In the case of a cancellation of testing, the Board of Health Agent must be notified twenty-four (24) hours prior to the scheduled test to avoid forfeiture of application fee. (This does not include cancellation due to weather conditions.)

The applicants Engineer must submit within sixty (60) days of the date of the percolation and/or soils evaluation, the results of those tests on DEP approved forms pursuant to 310 CMR 15.018. When testing is done separately results shall be forwarded and not left until the testing has been completed.

A complete soils test shall be valid for a period of two (2) years. A complete soils test shall be considered the performance of both the soils evaluation holes and percolation test. The two (2) year period shall commence upon the performance of the complete soils test.

If the tests are done separately, (soils evaluation one time, percolation test another), then the remaining part of the test must be completed within one (1) year of the performance of the first part of the test to avoid forfeiture of the application. A new application will be required to continue testing.

If one or both tests should fail and the lot is comprised of enough area, then all other testing must be performed at least sixty (60) feet from the failed test. A second application with appropriate fee may be required prior to testing. Abandoned test (other than due to high groundwater) will be considered as fail.

Unused applications will be good for a period of one (1) year, after which time they shall be considered null and void and a new application submitted; application fees are nonrefundable.

Additional tests due to movement of the system or other engineering requirements will need a new application and will be subject to scheduling procedures.

Extensions beyond the two (2) year time limit for completed test are allowed with certain provisions. Please see Section 201-5 (L) of these regulations.

As of March 31, 1998, the Board of Health will no longer accept soils data performed under the 1978 Title 5 Code.

### **DESIGN/APPROVAL PHASE**

Since this form is being submitted with the design plans, soils testing (percolation and deephole testing) have already been performed. Your design professional will submit to the Board of Health the designed plans along with other required State and Local forms. Once that application has been deemed complete, the Board of Health has 45 days to review and act upon the submission. You should note that if a plan is not approved a new 45 day "clock" will start on re-submission of the plans. During this phase, your design professional may need approval in the form of a variance or local-upgrade approval that will require either a Public Hearing (LUA requiring abutter(s) notification) or Public Meeting (LUA not requiring abutter(s) notification) before the Board of Health. The Board of Health Meetings are held the first Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m., if the meeting is on a holiday the meeting will be moved to the following Monday. In some cases your abutters may need to be notified. Once this process is complete your plan will be approved, and you will be ready to install your septic system.

### **INSTALLATION PHASE**

Once your system is approved. You will need to have it installed. You must hire a Septic System Installer who is licensed in the town to install (a list of licensed installers is located on the Town of Oxford, Board of Health webpage). Your Design Professional can help you with this choice. Once chosen the Installer will obtain a permit and plans from the Board of Health to start construction. You should be aware that during inclement weather or the winter season, the installation of systems may be postponed or shut done until the weather conditions warrant. There will be a total of four inspections performed both by the Design Professional and the Board of Health. The Board of Health does a visual inspection only at this time, where the Design Professional will ensure that elevations and locations of the system are being installed in accordance with the approved design plan. The Installer will not be allowed to proceed until they have heard from both the Design Professional and the Board of Health. Once the system has been fully constructed both the installer and Design Professional will certify to the installation of the system.

### **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE PHASE**

Upon completion of the installation both the Installer of the system and the Design Professional are required to submit "as-built" paperwork to the town. This paperwork states that both the Installer and Design Professional certify they have installed and inspected the Sewage Disposal System in accordance with the applicable design plans and specifications. Once all paperwork has been submitted and is found to be in order then a Certificate of Compliance (COC) will be issued.

*This form is VERY important to you as it states that the septic system has been installed and is in compliance with all State and Local Regulations. This form will be needed for Tax purposes and will be valuable in the sale of your home.*

*Please understand at this point that it is your responsibility to ensure that your Design Professional and Licensed Installer submit all the required paperwork to the town. The Board of Health does not "chase after" paperwork but only act on paperwork that is submitted to our office.*

*Again, if you have any questions about the procedures, process, or any other aspects of the installation of a septic system, please do not hesitate to contact the Board of Health.*