

The system is not in failure, but there are issues...

Have you ever come across an on-site system that is not in failure as defined in Rule 410 IAC 6-8.3-33, but the system is experiencing some kind of malfunction or is in need of service? I am sure we have all run into that scenario at least a time or two. The definition of failure includes:

- The system refuses to accept sewage at the rate of application causing interference with home plumbing,
- Effluent is ponding, seeping or otherwise discharged to the ground surface, or
- Effluent discharge causes contamination of potable water, ground water or surface water.

The definition of failure does not necessarily include an outlet filter that is in need of servicing, an effluent pump that is no longer functioning or a blocked perimeter drain, unless the sewage is being discharged or causing backup in the home because of that issue. If the system is not in failure, the local health department cannot use section 55(a) of the rule to require repairs to these components. However, the local health department can utilize section 55(b) to require repair, replacement or servicing of any component of a residential on-site sewage system that is defective, malfunctioning or in need of service in a time limit set by the local health officer. I have just provided a few examples of what this section may be used for. This is a very powerful section of the rule, and could be seen as an opportunity to possibly prevent a system from going into failure. If you are not familiar with this section, now is a good time to become familiar with it.

Why is this?

Q: Why do local health departments issue minimum specifications for residential systems?

A: Rule 410 IAC 6-8.3 does not require the local health department to issue minimum requirements for residential systems; however, there are multiple benefits to the local health department providing at least the minimum specifications for an on-site sewage system to the homeowner/agent for the area evaluated. One of the biggest benefits is to the local health department staff. Determining minimum requirements based on interpretation of the on-site soil evaluation report requires the staff to identify the limitations of the site as well as the characteristics of the soil. With the minimum requirements already determined, the staff of the local health department can easily confirm that the type, size and design criteria of the system as designed is in compliance with the rule when plans are submitted. The local health department can review the soils and determine minimum specs in the relative calm and quiet of the office and not under pressure while at the site with the soil scientist or when someone is waiting on a plan to be reviewed. The issuance of minimum requirements can also reduce the level of frustration between the system designer and the local health department during the review process. If the system designer has the specifics on what will be required at the site, there is a good probability that the plans will come closer to meeting the rule requirements than if the designer has to interpret the soils and make the system sizing and selection decisions without the benefit of the local health department review. The minimum specification sheet can also benefit the homeowner when they are gathering bids for their project. With a minimum spec sheet, the homeowner is able to provide the same specifications to each installer to get bids on the same system from each company. So, even though the rule does not require the local health department to issue minimum specifications for residential on-site sewage systems, the benefits far outweigh the time that is required in developing the minimum specs. If you need assistance with developing minimum specs for residential systems, please contact your ISDH field rep, and we will be glad to assist you. The iTOSS program has a great form that can provide minimum specifications to your applicants.

EPA SepticSmart Week – September 17-21, 2018

Really it's just right around the corner! Do your part and be SepticSmart! The EPA SepticSmart website can be accessed at www.epa.gov/septic. The website has a lot of information, webcasts, outreach tools, printable materials, and technical resources that are available to you at no charge. In 2017, Governor Eric Holcomb proclaimed SepticSmart Week in Indiana. We encourage local governments to recognize and promote SepticSmart Week as well. Let us know, and send us pictures, of what your county or local health department is doing for SepticSmart Week. We would love to hear what everyone is doing!



Residential OSS Design Workshops

The Residential OSS Design Workshops are all complete. Workshops were held in Marshall County, Dubois County, Putnam County, Wells County and Ripley County. We had 228 attendees, including installers, designers, local health department staff, a health officer, and suppliers attend the workshops. There were 74 local health department staff, representing 42 local health departments, among the attendees. We would like to thank Christine Stinson of Marshall County, Shawn Werner of Dubois County, Lisa Zeiner of Putnam County, Allyson Heller of Wells County and Jason Bischoff and Holley Rose of Ripley county for hosting the workshops. We hope to continue this method of training in the future...stay tuned for additional training opportunities! If you would like to host a workshop in the future, please contact us and we will put you on the list.

Please share!

I've had many requests to share the OSS News with those other than who it is emailed to. Please feel free to share with others in your office as well as outside your office. Some suggestions are: administrators, health officers, health board members, legal counsel, nurses, system installers and system designers. Spencer County is being very proactive and is hanging the OSS News on a bulletin board in their county building for the general public to see. Thanks Barb! If there is someone else in your local health department who would like to receive the email with the OSS News, please let me know and I will add them to my distribution list.

Dates to Remember:

*May 15-17 – IOWPA Inspector Certification Training and Testing – Marshall County (Installer test to be offered)
August 3-19 – Indiana State Fair – Please come and see the OSS display in the Pathways to Water Quality exhibit.

A distribution box and a portion of a trench is planned to be added to the exhibit this year.

September 17-21 – EPA SepticSmart Week

*Please check the IOWPA website for additional information (www.iowpa.org)

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