



Onsite Sewage System Repair/Relocation Protocol

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PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this protocol is to respond to public health concerns that are reported to the Department and to ascertain and document if the repair/relocation of a Small-Flow Onsite Sewage System (OSS) is in compliance with applicable Alabama Law and the State Board of Health Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Rules, Chapter 420-3-1. Ala. Admin. Code.

The objective of the Local County Health Department (LHD) concerning any OSS failure or a surface discharge of sewage reported to the LHD is to ensure that the OSS is repaired or relocated by the responsible person, to abate the unsanitary condition.

DEFINITIONS:

REPAIR - A corrective action taken to modify a failing portion of an existing OSS (any component) where the design parameters (BOD or flow) have not changed. Repair does not include replacement/relocation of an Effluent Disposal Field (EDF) or any activity defined as maintenance.

RELOCATION - an action to replace an existing OSS or existing EDF/Innovative Effluent Discharge System (EDS) when BOD or flow has changed, when requested by the applicant, or when there is an overriding environmental or health reason to require a new OSS. A replacement OSS/EDF/EDS is considered a new system and shall meet all current rules of a new OSS/EDS.

MAINTENANCE- periodic actions to sustain an OSS/EDS such as pumping the tank, cleaning or replacing the filter, replacing a non-perforated component (such as solid supply lines, solid headers, and crossovers), and any type of electronic/mechanical work. Other maintenance may include activities to evaluate or improve structural integrity of the tank or lid and repairing a baffle, inlet, or outlet fixture.

PUBLIC HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL SITE SPECIALIST (PHESS) - a full time employee of ADPH or a LHD who has completed the required training, testing and certification requirements for evaluating EDF site using soil morphology. A PHESS may evaluate sites for a Conventional Small-Flow OSS only. The PHESS shall be currently employed by the ADPH, conduct evaluations only in counties approved by ADPH for this program, and adhere to the requirements of these rules.

SOIL PROFESSIONAL- individuals defined below may perform soil evaluations in Alabama:

- **Professional Engineer (PE)** – a person as defined by the Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors.
- **Professional Geologist (PG)** – an individual as defined by the Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Geologists.
- **Professional Land Surveyor (PLS)**– an individual as defined by the Alabama Board of Licensure for Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors.
- **Professional Soil Classifier (PSC)** – an individual as defined by the Alabama Board of Registration for Professional Soil Classifiers.

RESPONSIBLE PERSON- in the case of a private dwelling, it is the property owner. In the case of a corporation, it is a principal executive officer. In the case of a partnership, it is a general partner. In the case of a sole proprietorship, it is the proprietor. In the case of a municipal, state, federal, or other public entity, it is either a principal executive officer or ranking elected official.

FAILURE- a breakage, weakness, or defect that causes a malfunction in the treatment, distribution, disposal, or dispersal of effluent into the EDF, or that causes a wash-out or disruption of the EDF as evidenced by one of the following:

- Surfacing or ponding of effluent at, over, or around any component of the OSS.
- Backing up of sewage within a dwelling or establishment as a result of a malfunction of the OSS.
- The contamination of ground or surface waters by an OSS.

DOCUMENTATION

When the LHD is contacted concerning a possible OSS failure, the Public Health Environmentalist (PHE) shall do a record search to determine if the OSS is a permitted system.

REPAIR OPTION #1

If the permit is on file, the following options are allowed:

- A septic tank may be replaced with verbal permission from the LHD to an installer. The installer shall contact the LHD on the date of installation and, if applicable, provide the tank number, along with other pertinent information of the repair. If time allows, the PHE may inspect the installation of the tank and shall document the repair in the database.
- If the existing EDF of a conventional OSS is to be repaired, the property owner may (see option #3) contact a soil professional to design or size a repair. The soil professional may perform his/her own tests or use soil data from the original permit if site conditions have not changed. This will require a CEP- 2 application, accompanying documents, and applicable fee before a Permit to Repair is issued. If new soil data is reported, a CEP-2/3 form must also be submitted.
- If the existing EDF of an engineered OSS is to be repaired, the property owner shall contact a professional engineer to design or size a repair. The professional engineer may perform his/her own tests or use soil data from the original permit if site conditions have not changed. This will require a CEP- 2 application, accompanying documents, and applicable fee before a Permit to Repair is issued. If new soil data is reported, a CEP-2/3 form must also be submitted.

REPAIR OPTION #2

If the permit is not on file at the LHD or cannot be provided by the responsible person:

- A septic tank may be replaced after the submission of a signed CEP-2 (first page) with fee, if applicable, to the LHD and a Permit to Repair is issued.
- If the existing EDF is to be repaired/relocated, the responsible person shall contact a soil professional for a site evaluation and follow the requirements for a new OSS. ADPH Soil Classifiers may be requested to assist if available. If certain components of the existing OSS are operationally sound, they may be incorporated into the replacement OSS.

REPAIR OPTION #3

This option is only available for a Small-Flow Conventional OSS. The responsible person, in coordination with an installer, shall submit a waiver of a Permit to Install (Repair). The waiver shall be signed by the responsible person, notarized, and signed by the installer who will perform the repair. The repair shall meet the requirements of Chapter 420-3-1 and a copy of the waiver shall be kept on file at the LHD.

Licensed Installers and the LHD

AOWB licensed installers shall comply with the applicable sections of Chapter 420-3-1 regarding installations and certifications.