Questions to ask your Septic System Professional

We recommend you contact a minimum of 3 certified professionals to compare prices and services.

Contact a designer if:
• Your system has failed and needs replacing.
• Building a new residence on your property.
• Remodeling your house and you need to change your septic system.
• Remodeling your house and you don’t have a record drawing (as-built) of your existing septic system.
• For a list of certified designers, visit tpchd.org/designers.

Ask the designer:
Will the services include the following?
• Preliminary site evaluation.
• Soil log digging.
• Design package.
• Stub-out inspection.
• Pressure test.
• Installation inspection.
• Backfill inspection.
• As-built package.
• Does this include Health Department fees?
• Do you charge extra for the Homeowner’s manual?
• Do you charge for extra visits or consultations?

Contact an installer when:
• Installing a new septic system that we have approved.
• Making any construction changes to the system—Health Department code requires that installation of a septic system be performed by certified septic system installers.
• Be sure you know what type of system you have before you call the installer.
• For a list of certified installers, visit tpchd.org/installers.

Ask the installer:
Will the services include the following?
• Preliminary evaluation.
• Design for tank replacement.
• Full installation.
• Backfill labor and materials.
• Warranty on your work.
• Electrical work.
• Does total bid include Health Department fee?
• Is this bid all inclusive? Any extra charges?

Tip: For a repair, the installer and designer should inspect the property, look at the soil logs, and determine the possible cause of failure.

Contact a certified Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Firm if:
• You were notified by the Health Department.
• You are remodeling your residence.
• You are selling your home (discuss with your realtor) and you need a property sale inspection for your Report of System Status (apply online at tpchd.org/rss).
• Your system isn’t operating properly—you need minor repairs on your system that do not requirea permit (Note: installers can also perform minor repairs).
• Your system is due for an O&M inspection—the chart shows required inspection frequencies based on the type of septic system you have.
• For a list of certified O&M Firms, visit tpchd.org/septicservicecompanies
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inspections every year</th>
<th>Inspections every three years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High Risk Classified Systems-Proprietary/Pretreatment</td>
<td>Duplexes (2 units only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large community systems</td>
<td>Small Community Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large Commercial Systems</td>
<td>Small Commercial Systems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camps</td>
<td>Off-site Drainfields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding Tanks</td>
<td>Mounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aerobic Treatment Units (ATU)</td>
<td>Sand Filters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Proprietary Treatment Units</td>
<td>Pressure Distribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gravity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ask the certified O&M Specialist:
- What will the O&M inspection include (e.g., checking baffles and for leaks, cleaning filters, digging to uncover lids, structural integrity and drainfield checks, etc.)?
- What isn’t included in the O&M inspection?
- What are the benefits to installing risers to the surface (if needed)?
- Ask about any discounts that might be offered (e.g., senior, new customer, etc.).
- Does the inspection cost include Health Department fee?
- When will the report be entered in OnlineRME for viewing?
- Keep track of your inspection report by logging into www.onlineRME.com and do a public record search.

Contact a certified pumper if:
- Your system needs pumping by an O&M Specialist.
- The total of sludge and scum in your tank is one third of the liquid depth (effluent) or more than 18 inches.
- You are selling your house--pumping of all tanks is required along with the O&M inspection of your septic system.
- Tanks should be pumped every 3-5 years depending on usage and family size.

Ask the certified pumper:
- What the pumping will include (e.g., checking baffles and for leaks, cleaning filters, pump tank pumping if needed, etc.)?
- Do you charge extra if my septic tank is over 1,000 gallons?
- If you have a long distance to reach the tanks or if they need to pump up a steep slope, provide the distance and elevation to the pumper—the pumper determines whether the truck can provide this type of service.
- Let the pumper know: size, type, accessibility of lids, age of house and last time system was pumped.
- Does the pumping cost include the Health Department fee?
- Ask about any discounts that might be offered (e.g., senior, new customer, etc.).
- When will the report be entered in OnlineRME for viewing?
- Keep track of your pumping report. Visit onlineRME.com and do a public record search.

Questions? Contact us at (253) 649-1420 or email us at EHSepticSystems@tpchd.org.