

Jefferson County Public Health Performance Measures 2015 Year-end Report

ONSITE SEWAGE (OSS) and SEPTIC OPERATIONS & MONITORING (O&M) PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS: Onsite Sewage (OSS) Permitting and Onsite Operations and Monitoring (O&M) Programs

MISSION: The mission of the Onsite Sewage Program is to minimize the threat of surface and ground water contamination from failing or improperly designed, installed or maintained onsite sewage systems. The mission of the Operation and Monitoring Program is to protect public health by ensuring onsite sewage systems are monitored, identify failures, and items that may lead to costly premature failures of OSS that contaminate ground and surface waters.

Goal	Objective	Task	Performance Measure	2010 Actual	2011 Actual	2012 Actual	2013 Actual	2014 Actual	2015 Planned	2015 Actual
Goal 1: Educate homeowners, builders, real estate personnel, banks, installers, designers and onsite system maintenance personnel in the proper operation and maintenance of onsite sewage systems	Develop written informational materials and conduct workshops for the public addressing OSS operation and maintenance, program incentives for initial inspection, installation of monitoring access risers and homeowner inspection program	Conduct OSS operations and maintenance needs and requirements workshops for homeowners & professionals	# of workshops and presentations	19	4	4	20	4	10	10
		Issue press releases about OSS training opportunities and general OSS info	# of press releases provided	--	--	--	6	4	18	5
	Provide training to community groups to increase awareness of OSS regulatory requirements	Create OSS operation and maintenance information to be included in Monitoring Inspection Reminders	Statements/info created	--	--	--	4	4	6	7

Goal 2: Ensure a high quality-onsite sewage system monitoring program	Send Monitoring Inspection Reminders to property owners	Create and send inspection reminders	# of reminders sent	--	--	--	800	0	4,000	4,980
	Review monitoring and inspection reports, provide timely follow-up and coordinate with online submittal program data	Develop procedure and standards to triage reports with corrective actions required	% of OSS receiving monitoring inspection	3.4%	3.4%	3.8%	4.7%	5.1%	6%	7.8%
			Pass/Fail	--	--	--	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS
		Review reports, triage, send follow-up letters/notices	# reports reviewed	--	--	--	641	685	800	1060
	# follow-up letters sent		--	--	--	154	156	175	168	
Ensure Local Sewage Management Plan is consistent with current status and practices	Update Local Sewage Management Plan to reflect progress and needed	Pass/Fail	--	--	--	FAIL	FAIL	PASS	FAIL	

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Goal 3: Investigate complaints and action requests in a timely manner to reduce the threat of human contact with untreated wastewater	Utilize existing data systems to track action requests and complaints ¹	Develop system to quantify response time for complaints within 30 days	Pass/Fail	--	--	--	FAIL	FAIL	PASS	PASS
		Create a report to track response time	Pass/Fail	--	--	--	FAIL	FAIL	PASS	FAIL
			% OSS complaints investigated within 30 days	--	--	--	90%	94%	90%	98%

Goal 4: Document all onsite sewage systems in Jefferson County	Identify previously unknown onsite sewage systems	Complete sanitary surveys to move sites served by OSS from unknown to known status	# of systems identified	69	100	107	204	69	120	107
			% of estimated existing 13,500 systems identified	73%	74%	75%	78%	78.5%	78.5	79.2

Goal 5: Implement the Homeowner Inspection Program adopted in code revisions May 2012 to comply with monitoring requirements under WAC 246-272A	Establish Homeowner Authorization program	Complete database upgrade incorporating all elements of Homeowner Inspection Authorization	Pass/fail	--	--	--	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS
	Establish online portal for monitoring inspection report submittal	Link database to online report portal	Pass/fail	--	--	--	PASS	PASS	PASS	PASS
	Establish access to training programs (Septics 101 and 201) for homeowners to obtain authorization to complete monitoring inspections	Provide trainings and link to online trainings	# of homeowners who take in person and online trainings	--	--	--	410	81	200	251
		Respond to requests for authorization to inspect by homeowners	# of homeowners authorized	--	--	--	192	75	150	147
# of homeowners that submit inspection reports	--		--	--	15	3	150	66		

¹ Complaints include all reports from the public and others regarding onsite sewage issues. These range from reports of someone parking or driving on their drainfield, living on property without a permitted septic system to surfacing sewage.

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SUMMARY OF KEY FUNDING/SERVICE ISSUES:

Tracking is done with existing data systems to evaluate effectiveness of permitting and monitoring programs. Ongoing O&M activities are funded through state and federal grants as well as the 'filing' fee that is submitted with monitoring inspection reports. Implementation is focused on: follow-up with homeowners on inspection results, training and providing resources to homeowners. A 'Septic Status' map was developed that allows a homeowner or other interested party to get information on the septic system and property by clicking on the parcel. Follow-up with homeowners on inspection results is critical to the understanding of how systems work and why maintenance and proper operation is important. A system for correspondence and follow-up is being implemented. The system allows us to identify different levels of severity and type of problem as well as target problems of a serious nature for additional action. The incentive program to assist homeowners in completing inspections and installing access risers and monitoring ports was available through the fall of 2015.

Identification of previously unknown onsite sewage systems is ongoing as part of a project in the Marine Recovery Area (MRA) along the Hood Canal. The state requirement that all unknown systems be identified by 2012 was not met but we are continuing to pursue identification of all unknown systems. Mid-year we implemented the requirement for septic tank pumping reports to be entered into OnlineRME which allows us to identify additional systems for which we had no records.

Due to a lack of staffing resources, our goal to complete the Local Management Plan was not met. We continued in 2015 to refine the goals and revisions of the Management Plan in light of changes in Clean Water District funding and legislative action.

Onsite sewage permitting and staffing has declined due to the economic downturn of the past several years. The number of permits received dropped significantly from 2007 to 2011. Activity has increased annually since 2011. Overall, current activity has increased 72% since 2011 with little change to staffing resources. We have added staff to support septic system installation inspection and permit completion to improve customer satisfaction and efficiency. The team continues to strive to maintain effective communication with our clients and partners (other state and local departments) to effectively manage workload and requests for information while diligently reviewing and enforcing county code and policies. Coordination with our Environmental Health Tech is assisting staff in timely review and documentation of activities in the database.

Training continues with professionals certified by JCPH. These meetings assist in improving the quality of submittals and offer an opportunity to resolve questions about the codes and challenging site conditions.

2015 STUDY/ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Septic system monitoring

Homeowner Authorization

- We held 7 classes for 251 individuals with 147 getting the authorization to inspect their OSS. We will continue to provide 'classroom' trainings on a regular basis, at least once a year to accommodate those who prefer that style of learning.
- All classes include information on funding available for repair or upgrade of an OSS as well as the rebate program for access riser and monitoring inspection. These have been very well received.

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- Testing of the training website by users out in the county has been completed with issues identified that we are working to correct. Access to a database administrator remains extremely limited which hampers our ability to move forward on this program. Although the establishment of a fiber optic line to the area has been effective in removing the barrier of internet speed to some it is still an issue in many areas of the county.

System identification, Reminders and Incentives

- A 'Septic Status' map tool was developed that allows a property owner or interested party to click on a parcel and view information about the septic system including: type of system, date last inspected and frequency of inspection required. It includes links to the most recent monitoring inspection in OnlineRME and links to property information on the Jefferson County website.
- The incentive/rebate program for access risers for your first monitoring inspection by a professional was available until September of 2015. The goal was to assist homeowners of previously unknown systems as well as many older systems that have never been inspected. It was not as heavily used as expected. We provided the brochure and application with all letters and sanitary surveys conducted by staff. We will continue to seek funding for incentives to inspect or install risers and expect the interest to increase when we start sending regular reminders to property owners.
- In July a mailing was sent to nearly 5,000 homeowners in the MRA and other shoreline areas specifically identifying the requirements for regular monitoring inspection. We have seen a 35% increase in monitoring inspections for 2015. General Inspection reminders are sent as part of the Sanitary Survey mailers. We anticipate sending site and system specific reminders as soon as the online homeowner authorization program is up and running.
- We did not succeed in identifying all unknown onsite sewage systems by the end of the 2012. Work continues toward this goal into next year by partnering with the Water Quality Department on a project in the lower Duckabush and the Hood Canal Watershed project. The project has effectively identified the unknown systems in the lower Duckabush River area. Completion of the Sanitary Surveys helps us to identify that a system is on a property but does not include a detailed inspection of the system. These systems are tracked separately from systems that have a regular monitoring inspection completed.
- In July 2015 we implemented the requirement for septic tank pumping to be recorded to the OnlineRME website. This offers an additional way for us to identify previously unknown septic systems.

Septic System Operation - Monitoring Inspection Follow-up and Complaint Investigation

- Monitoring Inspection Reports are reviewed. Follow-up letters were sent to 123 property owners where problems/deficiencies are noted that indicate either imminent failure or identify a violation of the permit. Response to these letters has been excellent and offer an opportunity to give additional information to new property owners. 10 letters were sent to property owners who did not respond or take action from the first letter. Letters were sent to 35 property owners that did not complete a monitoring inspection prior to property transfer.
- Results from monitoring inspections or complaint investigation- 131 Follow-up inspections by O&M providers were submitted to the online inspection database to document correction of deficiencies/problems that they observed. This is up 30% from 2014. Of the 43 repair applications that were received, 23 resulted from monitoring inspections and 4 resulted from complaint investigation.

Process Management and Planning

- We are maintaining a list of changes and updates needed to the Local Management Plan as well as identifying successes. We intended this project to be completed in 2015 but were unsuccessful due to workload issues.
- The Onsite Sewage, Solid Waste and Water Quality Divisions continue to add to our Standard Operating Procedures around enforcement and investigation of complaints and identified problems.

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- The Onsite Sewage Division is continuing work on the procedures for all regular practices: permit review and issuance, data entry and reporting, and tracking monitoring inspections and response to necessary corrections. Activities associated with our review of JC Development Review projects such as subdivision and building permits is included in this project.
- Use of the notice to property title for unresolved violations has been implemented. To date only 3 notices have been filed. We are reviewing possible cases for this action based on their risk to health and water quality. Several property owners have acted to correct long-standing violations when they are informed of this possibility of recording the notice. The notice will only be considered after our regular efforts have failed. Funding was approved in one of our grants to pay for the recording fees associated with filing the notice to title.
- Response to complaints and identification of problems is coordinated with staff from the Water Quality Department. We are using both the database as well as a tracking calendar to document communications and assure that all staff can see and understand what the status is on a particular site.
- A system to track the response time to complaints was developed but is not consistently used. Staff training is ongoing.

Septic Permit Applications/cases

- The number of permits received is slightly above 2014, approximately 4% more. We currently have one FTE carrying primary responsibility for all septic permit applications. A sustained increase in the permit load necessitated reallocating staff to maintain timeliness in permit review and issuance. In September of 2015 an additional .2 FTE (8 hr/week) was added bringing the total to 2.0 FTE. This enables permitting staff to focus on timely review of applications. Assessment of permit application activity and adding staff resources to the program will be a primary focus of action for 2016 as the current pace is unsustainable by the 2.0 FTE.
- All paper septic case records that could be identified to a parcel have been scanned and are available on the Jefferson County Laserfiche Weblink. These records are used extensively by property owners, onsite sewage professionals, realtors, and interested parties. Staff assists clients in using the site and can also email a file if necessary. Enforcement letters and updated site plans from Monitoring Inspections are also scanned to the septic case record.

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PROGRAM STATISTICS

PERMITS	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
# of septic permit applications submitted ¹	231	169	158	118	147	148	156	163
# of evaluations of existing system (EES)	295	255	463	469	511	641	781	1060
# of systems repaired/upgraded	32	32	37	31	43	40	46	43
% of system failures less than 5 years in use	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
% of failures/major maintenance	<2%	<2%	<2%	<2%	<2%	<2%	<4%	5%
# of complaints received*	42	43	52	36	20	60	52	109
# of complaints closed**	24	19	33	25	26	25	43	42
# of Installers Certified		37	37	36	34	31	31	27

OPERATION, MAINTANANCE & MONITORING	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
% of existing systems receiving regular 3 rd party monitoring. ²	2.20%	1.80%	3.40%	3.40%	3.80%	4.7%	5.1%	7.8
# of previously unknown systems having a monitoring inspection	15	9	10+ 59 ⁵	15+ 85 ⁴	14+93 ⁴	204	69	107
% of monitoring inspections resulting in some maintenance needed.	29%	28%	56% ⁵	68% ⁵	59% ⁵	63% ⁵	63% ⁵	64%
% of monitoring inspections resulting in required significant maintenance or repair.	12.5	16%	18.70%	12.40%	18.50%	13%	23.3%	XX

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
# of educational workshops	6	5	19	4	9	20	4	10
# of workshop participants	239	102	355	156	220	410	131	354

* Includes COM cases created when violation identified during a sanitary survey.

**The number of Closed complaints can be greater than Received because cases from previous years may have been closed during the current year.

¹Number of applications does not equal approved permits

² Based on estimated 13,500 systems in the County (from the Local Sewage Management Plan)

⁴The first number indicates systems that were identified and observed via regular monitoring inspections. The second number indicates systems that were identified (and had some level of observation) via sanitary surveys and are sites where no previous records exist.

⁵ Includes inspections where the only maintenance item identified was that the tank needed to be pumped. Previous years did not include this maintenance item.

XX Data were not available at time of publication.