



Home Sewage Treatment System Discharge Permit – Information for Homeowners

Anyone who owns and operates a discharging household sewage treatment system must have a permit from Ohio EPA. The discharge permit requires proper operation and maintenance of the system.

If you own and operate a discharging household sewage treatment system (HSTS), it is important to know your responsibilities. Please thoroughly read the permit and associated information at epa.ohio.gov/dsw/permits/GP_HouseholdSewageTreatmentPlants.aspx and maintain a copy with your important household records.

Why do I need a permit?

Any wastewater discharge to a stream, river or lake is unlawful, unless it has a valid discharge permit, referred to as National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. The NPDES permit ensures that the discharge follows all applicable state, and federal water pollution control laws and is protective of public health and safety. In Ohio, only Ohio EPA has the authority to issue NPDES permits. Ohio EPA and your local health department each play a role in the management of HSTS. These roles are specified in state regulations.

What are my responsibilities?

- 1) For **new construction or replacement** of an HSTS system, after receiving initial coverage under the NPDES Permit from Ohio EPA, obtain an installation permit for an approved HSTS from the local health department. In general, as the homeowner, you should work with your local health department on most issues relating to your HSTS.
- 2) Maintain an **Operation Permit** for the HSTS from your local health department for the life of the system. The Ohio Administrative Code requires that an operation permit be issued and maintained for all HSTS. Your local health department establishes the terms and conditions of this operation permit. Maintain a copy of your operation permit with your important household records.
- 3) Operate the HSTS under an appropriate **Operations and Maintenance Service contract** from a manufacturer trained/certified service provider that is registered with your local health department. Proper operation and maintenance of your system is very important to make sure it works effectively and efficiently for many years and does not create nuisance conditions or contaminate water resources. Your local health department or HSTS installer can help you find a registered service provider in your area. Maintain a copy of the service contract with your important household records.
- 4) Have **annual diagnostic sampling** performed to evaluate performance of the HSTS. This sampling can be completed by the service provider as part of the operations and maintenance service contract or through the local health district, but not all local health districts provide this sampling service. The purpose of the sampling is to make sure the system is working properly and to help manage operation. It is the homeowner's responsibility to make sure that a sample is collected and reported to the local health district. Samples must be collected and tested for:
 - Total Suspended Solids (TSS)
 - Ammonia
 - Five-Day Carbonaceous Biochemical Oxygen Demand (CBOD₅)
 - Dissolved Oxygen (DO)
 - E. coli
 - Chlorine (if applicable)
- 5) **Permit Renewal** — By federal law, NPDES permits can only be issued in five-year increments and must be renewed to continue coverage. The Operation Permit from your local health department is a separate permit that must also be renewed with your local health department.
- 6) **Permit Transfer** — If your property changes ownership, you must submit a General Permit Coverage Transfer form to Ohio EPA.