



St. Joseph County Health Department

“Promoting physical and mental health and facilitating the prevention of disease, injury, and disability for all St. Joseph County residents”

PROCESS FOR OBTAINING A COMMERCIAL SEPTIC PERMIT

A permit from the Health Department must be obtained to install, replace, or repair any commercial septic system. This is required to protect the property owner, our drinking water supplies, and public health. The approval of the Indiana State Department of Health may also be required depending on the size and type of the system. The following is process that must be followed to obtain a permit from the Health Department for a commercial septic system.

1. The property owner obtains a soil report from a certified soil scientist consistent with the requirements of the Health Department. Three complete soil borings from the area of the new septic system are required. The Health Department can provide a list of the soil scientists registered to do work in St. Joseph County.
2. The owner submits soil reports to the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) 317-233-7177 along with any required documentation, who will issue a technical data sheet and then decide to process the application or delegate the application to the Health Department.
 - a. If ISDH decides to process the application, the applicant must first follow the ISDH procedures and obtain their approval and then apply for a County permit using the procedures shown in items 3 through 10 below.
 - b. If ISDH decides to delegate the application to the County, they will issue a technical data sheet (specifications) and the applicant will then need to obtain a County permit using the procedures shown in items 3 through 10 below. Most applications are delegated to the County Health Department.
3. The owner submits the soil reports, a permit application, and a non-refundable permit fee to the Health Department. The owner may authorize a septic installer to perform this task for them. **The Health Department accepts cash, Master Card or Visa, money orders, cashiers checks & business checks. Personal checks are not accepted. Permit fees are shown below.**
4. The owner gives the technical data sheet from ISDH to licensed septic installers or engineers so they may design a system and provide the owner with a bid for the work. The Health Department recommends that everyone obtain at least two bids.
5. For new construction (structures that are not yet constructed) the area of the proposed septic system must be roped off with steel posts, rope, and signs according to the Health Department’s standard requirements prior to submitting the design. If the site is not roped off, the application will be rejected.
6. The contractor selected by the owner to install the system submits a design to the Health Department for review and approval. The designs must comply with State law, County Code, the Technical Data Sheet and drawing requirements issued by the Health Department.
7. The Health Department conducts a site inspection and reviews the designs. If site damage is observed during the on-site review and additional borings are required, it may be necessary to resubmit the borings to the ISDH and the process will essentially start over. Deficient designs are returned to the contractor for revision. The revision of designs is the most common cause of delays in the process.

8. The Health Department prepares site-specific approval requirements, as necessary, and issues a permit.
9. The Contractor installs the system according to State and County laws and the requirements in the permit.
10. If a contractor encounters something in the field which prevents the system from being installed according to the requirements in the permit, the contractor immediately calls the Health Department so that a course of action can be determined to fulfill the permit.
11. No deviation from the permit is allowed unless approved in advance.
12. The contractor calls the Health Department 24 hours in advance of when the installation will be ready for an inspection. For certain types of systems, the Health Department will perform several inspections of the system at various stages of construction. **The contractor must contact the Health Department in advance if the system is not going to be ready for inspection at the time arranged.**
13. Upon a final inspection by the Health Department and a determination that it appears the system was installed according to all requirements, the Health Department approves the system and the owner may begin using the system.

The Health Department gives priority to businesses with failed systems and to businesses with extenuating circumstances. The following are typical time frames for each major step in the process.

Property owner obtaining soil borings from a soil scientist:	Up to 10 days
ISDH issuing a technical data sheet:	Up to 30 days
Property owner obtaining estimates and a design from a septic installer:	Up to 15 days
Health Department issuing a permit after receipt of a complete design:	Up to 5 days
Installation of the system is dependent on weather and contractor availability.	

Permit application fees for commercial construction are as follows:

Commercial New Construction Installation	\$250
Commercial Replacement Installation	\$250
Commercial Repair	\$50

Please direct all inquiries to the Health Department's Environmental Section @ (574) 235-9721