



## 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"*

### SCHEDULING INSPECTIONS

#### Contacting the Health Department for an Inspection:

- All inspections must be arranged through the office of the Health Department at least 24 hours in advance of when the inspection is needed.
- Call 574-235-9721 to schedule an inspection.
- Do not call inspectors. They cannot schedule inspections.
- If you are not going to be ready for an inspection at the scheduled time, you must call the Health Department to arrange a new time as soon as possible. The Health Department can usually meet your revised time. We will also try to accommodate a schedule that is moved up.

#### Inspection Requirements:

- Gravity systems.
  - Usually requires only one inspection when installation is complete but the system is not yet covered.
  - All portions of a septic system shall remain uncovered to the maximum extent possible until inspected and approved by the Health Department.
  - At a minimum, both ends of all trenches, all tanks, the distribution box, residential sewer, and all portions of the headers shall remain uncovered until the system is inspected.
- Pressure distribution systems.
  - Requires the same inspections as a gravity system.
  - An inspection of the pump and alarm when they are operational.
- Mound inspections:
  - A pre-plow site inspection of the delivery line, the plow as it is performed, and the placement of the sand immediately thereafter. You must notify the office that you are requesting a mound plow inspection when you schedule the appointment.
  - An inspection after the placement of distribution network with pipes exposed to verify size of manifold, laterals, placement of lateral holes, placement of end cap holes, size of delivery line, placement of tanks and residential sewer.
  - An inspection after the cover is placed and of the pump and alarm when they are operational.
- Perimeter drains:
  - An inspection of the depth, piping, rock fill, and outfall of all sides of the perimeter drain.
  - Gravel in perimeter drains shall remain uncovered to the maximum extent practical until inspected and, in all cases, a section of the drain tile shall be exposed at one location on each side of the drain.
- Other requirements:
  - **It is the installer's responsibility to obtain the pump/alarm check even if the electrical work is not completed right away.**
  - If site characteristics (e.g. limited space) require that part of the absorption field be covered to install the remainder of the field, this must be noted on the proposed site plan.
  - The Health Department may require an inspection by the Health Department or soil scientist where soil removal or a deep cut and backfill with sand are required.

When Field Conditions Prevent the Installation of the System as Approved

**Installers must contact the Health Department at 574-235-9721 before proceeding with an installation if the system cannot be installed according to the following:**

- Applicable ISDH requirements,
- St. Joseph County Code 51,
- The approved design and site plan,
- The specifications and permit stipulations issued by the Health Department, and
- Any other lawful direction provided by ISDH or the Health Department.

Among the conditions where the installer must stop work and call the Health Department are:

- The required fall in piping cannot be met;
- Site has been disturbed since the soil report or design were submitted;
- The sewer line was “stubbed out” in a different location other than that of the approved drawing;
- The location of tank or any other component needs to be changed;
- There is insufficient space to install the approved design;
- A pump assisted system requires changes in piping or a change in elevation of components;
- Previously unknown soil characteristics are discovered that were not detected by soil borings, i.e. fill, blocks, foundations, perched water, old tanks.
- Changing materials from those specified on approved drawing.

The Health Department may be able to approve some alterations over the phone. Others may require as-built drawing. Others may require the installation to be stopped until the Environmental Health Specialist can decide further action.