

Dover Township Sewage Management Program Ordinance

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do other municipalities in York County have a Sewage Management Program?

Yes, several municipalities in York County have adopted a Sewage Management Program and many more are considering programs as they perform sewage facilities planning.

2. What are the responsibilities of the property owner under the program?

All septic system owners must have their septic tanks pumped out and inspected at least once every four (4) years. The Township will be divided into four (4) sections for the purpose of administering the program. All septic system owners in a given section will receive notices from the Township at the beginning of the year directing them to have their systems pumped during the calendar year. Property owners must contract with a pumper/hauler of their choice to have the system pumped and inspected during the calendar year the notice is received. The pumper/hauler will complete a York County Sludge/Septage Manifest and Report and provide the property owner with two (2) copies. It will be the responsibility of the property owner to send the municipality copy to the Township.

3. How much will this program cost?

The cost for the periodic pumping and inspection should be similar to what you currently pay to have your system pumped. There are about 20 private firms that are licensed by the York County Solid Waste Authority to provide septic pumping services in the County. You may want to obtain price quotes from several firms before selecting one that is right for you. The Township's cost to administer the program is expected to be small. Therefore a fee for the administration will not be charged to the property owner. Dover Township will review the actual costs of administration and make adjustments if necessary in the future. The overall cost for pumping and program administration is very small when compared to the cost for public sewer service or septic system repairs.

4. What if I just had my septic system pumped?

Property owners, who have had their septic systems pumped out within one year of receiving the initial notice from the Township, do not have to have their system re-pumped. However, the property owner will need to provide to the Township a copy of the Sludge/Septage Manifest and Report as proof of the pumping.

5. What if I want to have my system pumped more frequently than every four (4) years?

You are free to have your system pumped out more frequently than every four (4) years. However, the pumper/hauler is required to complete the York County Sludge/Septage Manifest and Report each time a septic tank is emptied. A copy of the completed Sludge/Septage Manifest and Report should be submitted to the Township so it has a record of the pumping.

6. What if I believe that pumping every four (4) years is too frequent for my system?

The Sewage Management Program Ordinance provide for pumping intervals greater than every four (4) years when the septic system owner can demonstrate to the Township that the system can operate properly without the need for pump-out for a period longer than four (4) years. In no case shall the period extend beyond eight (8) years. Requests must be made in writing, on the attached form and sent to the Township. The Township will determine if an exemption can be granted to the four (4) year pumping frequency based on such factors as tank size, household size, historical pumping frequency, and other factors the Township may consider pertinent.

7. How will the pumper/hauler access my septic tank to pump it?

The Ordinance requires the septic tank to be pumped through the manhole. This means the property owner will need to dig (or contract someone to dig) the soil off the tank to expose the manhole lid so the pumper/hauler can open the manhole and properly pump the tank. If the property owner desires to install a manhole extension to position the manhole lid at or near the surface of the ground, a modification permit is required to perform this work.

8. What will the Township do with the information provided on the York County Sludge/Septage Manifest and Report?

Dover Township will enter the information contained on the inspection form into its Sewage Management Program database. This information will be used to:

- A. Confirm the system has been pumped out and inspected;
- B. Confirm the system is operating properly;
- C. Provide information to the Township to plan for potential public sewer extensions to areas of need.

9. What if a problem is found by the pumper/hauler during the inspection?

If the manifest and Report indicates a problem with the system, the Township will forward the form to the Township Sewage Enforcement Officer (SEO) to investigate.

The SEO will contact the property owner to arrange for a time to investigate the problem. The Township SEO is a fully trained professional who will work with the property owner to resolve the problem. Sometimes the solutions involve simple, inexpensive steps that do not require modification to the septic system. However, in other cases the solution may require system modification, repair or replacement.

10. What will happen if I do not comply with the ordinance?

The Township Supervisors hope all Township citizens will fully comply with the provisions of the ordinance. The ordinance has been developed to protect public health, the water resources of the Township, and the citizens' investment in their on-lot sewage systems. All on-lot system owners must comply with the ordinance in order for these goals to be reached. Any person that fails to comply with any provision of the ordinance shall, upon conviction by the District Justice, be subject to a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$1,000 plus costs or imprisonment. This penalty provision is similar to the penalty provisions of other Township ordinances.

11. Where else can I get information about on-lot septic systems?

There are several web sites that deal directly with sewage, septic systems, and on-lot management. These include the National Small Flows Clearinghouse, choose septic news; the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, choose subjects, wastewater, on-lot sewage.

12. What else should I be doing to maintain my septic system?

The most important action to properly maintain a septic system is to have the system pumped out on a regular basis. However, what is put into the system can also impact its operation. Only sewage and normal domestic wastes should be discharged into the system. Industrial wastes, automobile oil and other domestic oil, excessive fats and grease, toxic and hazardous substances must not be placed down the drain. You should also consider either composting or disposing of food preparation wastes in the trash instead of relying on a garbage disposal unit, which greatly increase the loading to a septic system. Clean surface or ground water, including spring water, water from roof or cellar drains, and water from basement sump pumps must also be kept out of the system. The distribution field should be maintained with grass cover. Heavy equipment of automobiles should never be driven over the distribution field.