

Septic Systems

When someone lives in an area not serviced by a sewer system, which takes household wastewater away to a central treatment plant for discharge, they must have an in-ground treatment and disposal system. Commonly known as septic systems, they are now also known as *sewerage systems* because of the new regulation that governs their installation and use – the [Sewerage System Regulation \(BC Reg 326/2004\)](#).

Proper construction of septic systems is essential to prevent sewage from “breaking out” to the surface of the ground, entering ground water or from entering surface water, where it can contaminate the environment and cause a health hazard.

The new regulation has changed the process for installing a system. Before May 31, 2005 a permit to construct had to be obtained from the Public Health Inspector. He or she would inspect the lot prior to issuing the permit and after construction, to ensure the installation was done properly. The new regulation puts the onus on the industry and on the homeowner to ensure systems are designed, installed and maintained properly. Now, instead of obtaining a permit, an “Approved Person” (AP) files a “Record of Sewerage System”, including the plans, and after he or she has installed the system, files a “Letter of Certification” along with a maintenance plan to finalize the system. There is a one-time \$200 fee for filing a Record of Sewerage System. The submission of a “Letter of Certification” is required within two years of the original “Record of Sewerage System” filing date.

Under the old regulation, a homeowner could install a system, now they must use an AP. An AP can either be an engineer who has experience and/or training in soils and sewerage systems, or a “Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner” (ROWP).

The homeowner is responsible to follow the maintenance plan for the septic system so that it does not pose a health hazard.

Find an engineer on [The List of Professionals for Sewerage System Regulation](#) at the APEGBC website. Find an ROWP on [Onsite Wastewater Registration Program](#) at the ASTTBC website (go to the link at the bottom of the page.)

Find a Public Health Inspector nearest you. You can gather more information on this program, or be directed to a local specialist. Visit the [Onsite Wastewater Consumer Information Centre](#).

- [Sewerage System Regulation \(BC Reg 326/2004\)](#)
- [The List of Professionals for Sewerage System Regulation](#)
- [Onsite Wastewater Registration Program](#)
- [Onsite Wastewater Consumer Information Centre](#)
- [What are On-Site Sewage Systems and how are they Managed?](#)