

Scioto County Health Department

Sewage Treatment System (STS)

Operation and Maintenance Program (O&M)

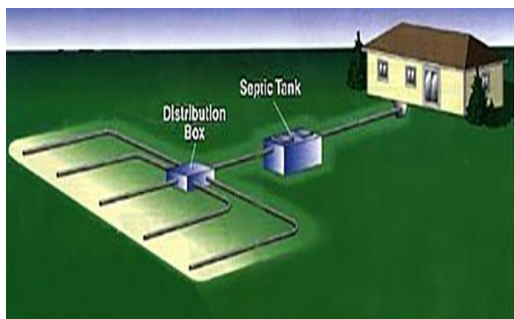


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Introduction

State-wide minimum sewage treatment system rules were adopted for the first time in Ohio's history in 1975. The rules were updated again in 1977. As limitations to these rules were identified over time, additional updates were proposed but never brought into code. As a result, many counties began to develop and adopt their own rules and regulations. The State of Ohio passed new state-wide rules and regulations effective January 1, 2007. The new state wide rules were only in place for 6 months before the state legislature rescinded them and brought back the original 40-year-old rules. After many years of committee work, the current rules and regulations were adopted effective January 1, 2015. Every county in the State of Ohio has the same rules and regulations at this time - Ohio Administrative Code 3701-29-19 Sewage Treatment Systems.

One section of these rules, OAC 3701-29-19(A) Requires the board of health to develop a program for the administration of Operation and Maintenance (O&M) Management for Household Sewage Treatment Systems (HSTS) and Grey Water Recycling Systems (GWRS) and system owner education in compliance with the Ohio Revised Code and Ohio Administrative Code.

Benefits of O&M Management

Maintaining your Household Sewage Treatment Systems (HSTS) will help the system to operate properly, increase the life of the system, and decrease the risk of causing a public health nuisance. A healthy, well-maintained system keeps our groundwater safe, prevents pollution of our surface waters, and helps protect public health.

Another benefit of the O&M program is to help the homeowner if they go to sell their property or if they are looking to purchase a property. The program keeps records from service providers, installers, and septic pumpers on maintenance. All septic systems typically have a lifespan of 20 to 30 years just like most of your home roofs and are a big financial investment. It is important that homeowners are aware of their septic system and how to keep their system operating effectively and efficiently to ensure a longer life.

Regular septic system maintenance fees of \$250 to \$500 every three to five years is a bargain compared to the cost of repairing or replacing a malfunctioning system, which can cost between \$7,000 and \$20,000 for a conventional system. Alternative systems can cost even more.

Scioto County's O&M Management Program

Development

Scioto County's O&M plan was developed and updated in response to the implementation of OAC 3701-29-19 and the requirements of the Ohio Department of Health with the input of stakeholders, township trustees, the Scioto County Board of Health, SCHD staff, and the Ohio Department of Health. Scioto County General Health District Resolutions establishing the O&M program are: Operation and Maintenance Program for On-Lot Home Septic Systems June 19, 2015 (01-15), Resolution for the Amendment of the Operation and Maintenance Program for Household Sewage Treatment Systems March 10, 2023 (E-01-23), and Resolution for the Amendment of the Operation and Maintenance Program for Household Sewage Treatment Systems March 8, 2024 (E-01-24)

Goals

- Maintain a program in compliance with OAC 3701-29-19
- Maintain a program in compliance with the Ohio Department of Health's expectations
- Identify and correct sewage treatment systems (STS) that are creating public health nuisances
- Inventory all STS in Scioto County
- Homeowner education
- Update old permits with current information
- Enter all STS in Scioto County into the O&M Management Program starting with systems installed, repaired, or replaced after January 1, 2015
- Develop and Maintain O&M requirements appropriate for every system type
- Enforce the enrollment and renewal of O&M permits
- Maintain records regarding O&M activities

Enrollment

- All STS installed, altered, or replaced starting January 1, 2015 will be automatically enrolled into the O&M program. At the time of enrollment, homeowners will be provided system specific O&M requirements.
- There will be no enrollment fee for an STS issued a new Permit to Install or Alter a Sewage Treatment System.
- There will be a non-refundable enrollment fee* for an existing STS which has not been previously enrolled. The renewal fee is set to cover the costs of managing the O&M program.

* Refer to Fee Schedule

- **Enrollment of Sewage Treatment Systems Installed Before January 1, 2015**

There are no clear indications of enrollment requirements for sewage treatment systems installed before January 1, 2015 in the Ohio Administrative Code or Ohio Revised Code. Therefore, The Scioto County Health Department is required to follow the instructions from the Ohio Department of Health.

“SCHD must develop a timeline and process to actively enroll all pre-2015 installed systems.”
– Ohio Department of Health Resurvey Report

Enrollment Phases for STS Installed Before January 1, 2015

Developed in accordance with OAC 3701-29-19(A)(2).

PHASE 1 - 2024	PHASE 2 – 2025	PHASE 3 – 2026	PHASE 4 - 2027
- Release public announcement of enrollment phases and enrollment process - Finish inventory of pre-2015 records - Enroll all recorded off-lot discharging STS installed before 2007	- Enroll all STS in high density areas - Enroll all recorded STS with a pretreatment component requiring service contract. - Identify remaining unrecorded off-lot discharging STS - Enroll any remaining off-lot discharging STS	- Enroll all remaining recorded STS (Primarily septic tank to leaching systems)	- Seek to identify STS not previously recorded - Enroll any remaining STS identified
- Enroll all STS found creating a public health nuisance per ORC 3718.011 - Accept all voluntary enrollment	- Enroll all STS found creating a public health nuisance per ORC 3718.011 - Accept all voluntary enrollment	- Enroll all STS found creating a public health nuisance per ORC 3718.011 - Accept all voluntary enrollment	- Enroll all STS found creating a public health nuisance per ORC 3718.011 - Accept all voluntary enrollment

Enrollment Process for STS Installed Before January 1, 2015

- The Scioto County Health Department will select the STS to be enrolled based on the Pre-2015 Sewage Treatment System Enrollment Phases.
- The Scioto County Health Department will notify the selected STS owner through mail that the STS has been selected for enrollment. The owner will be selected from the Scioto County Auditor’s office records. The owner will be provided with the requirements for enrollment, a list of service providers, and a 60-day time frame for compliance.

▪ **Homeowner Actions – Complete within 60 days**

1) **Select a service provider.**

Selecting the right service provider is important. Most aerator or pre-treatment component manufacturers require certification for service providers. For these types of systems, **the homeowner must take careful consideration to select a service provider with the correct certification for their system type.** Please contact Scioto County Health Department if you need assistance identifying your system manufacturer. All service providers are authorized to inspect and service standard septic tank to leaching systems.

2) **Have the service provider inspect the STS, and perform service, pumping, or repair as needed.**

If the STS must be altered, replaced, or updated, the homeowner must follow the steps for obtaining a permit and complete the alteration, replacement, or update. In this case, the previous permit will be abandoned and replaced with a new permit.

3) **Obtain a service contract if applicable.**

The owner of an STS with an aerator, pretreatment component, or discharging STS is required to maintain a service contract for the life of the system. The service contractor must be certified by the applicable equipment manufacturer. If a homeowner decides to cancel their service contract, they must inform SCHD and provide documentation of the new service contract. For enrollment, **a service contract must be submitted which is valid for the duration of the upcoming permit period.** A service contract is not required for a septic tank to leaching system.

4) **Obtain a copy of the O&M Enrollment Inspection.
Obtain a copy of service report(s), and/or service contract (if applicable).**

The Scioto County Health Department prefers that the inspection report be representative of the condition of the system after all the necessary service, pumping, or repair has been completed. If the inspection report indicates conditions which need corrected, The Scioto County Health Department is required to take enforcement action and deny enrollment until the system is corrected. The purpose of the inspection report is to obtain enough information about the system and its condition to issue an accurate O&M Permit with correct requirements.

5) Submit a copy of the O&M Enrollment Inspection, any applicable service reports or service contracts, and enrollment fee to the Scioto County Health Department.

- The Scioto County Health Department will issue an O&M Permit for the STS if it is acceptable and the requirements are met. If the system is unacceptable, the homeowner will be notified of any required actions and a timeline for compliance. An O&M Permit will not be issued until the required actions are completed and documented on an inspection report.

Operation & Maintenance Permits

- At the time of enrollment, the system owner will be issued an Operation & Maintenance Permit. The permit will list the system information and include all applicable O&M requirements. In the event if the sale of the property, the permit will transfer to the new owner.
- All O&M permits must be renewed for the life of the system.
- The O&M Permit periods and renewal frequencies based on system type are:
 - 2 years – All discharging STS, STS with aerator or other pretreatment component
 - 5 years – All other STS

Renewal Requirements

- Homeowners will receive renewal notices when their permit expiration is approaching or when their permit has expired.
- Homeowners must complete and submit the Scioto County Sewage Treatment System Operation and Maintenance Permit Renewal Application.
- Homeowners must keep detailed records of any inspections, maintenance service, corrective actions, abandonment, monitoring, service contracts, water quality sampling, sampling results, NPDES annual sampling, tank pumping receipts, tank and distribution box inspections, cleaning of effluent filters, and any other applicable information that demonstrates maintenance of the system. These records shall be provided to the board of health within 60 days of any O&M inspection.
- Homeowners must comply with all system specific or manufacturer's O&M requirements.
- The renewal fee* will be set at a reasonable level to cover the costs of managing the O&M program. * *Refer to Fee Schedule*

- At a minimum, the homeowner or their service provider must submit at least one completed System Service Report or O&M Inspection Form signed by a service provider registered in Scioto County per O&M permit period. The service provider must be certified by the applicable equipment manufacturer. The homeowner or their service provider must submit all service reports demonstrating service at the frequency required by the equipment manufacturer.
- The owner of a STS with an aerator, pretreatment component, or discharging STS is required to maintain a service contract for the life of the system. The service contractor must be certified by the applicable equipment manufacturer. If a homeowner decides to cancel their service contract, they must inform SCHD and provide documentation of the new service contract. For renewal, a service contract must be submitted which is valid for the duration of the upcoming permit period.
- The owner of an STS that has been issued coverage under the Ohio EPA General Permit to Discharge Wastewater from Household Sewage Treatment Systems under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) must comply with the requirements of the permit.
- If a Registered Environmental Health Specialist, or Registered Environmental Health Specialist in Training at SCHD determines that the requirements of renewal are not met, the renewal will be denied until the renewal requirements are met. The renewal fee is nonrefundable.
- If the system is found unacceptable, the homeowner will be notified of any required actions and a timeline for compliance. An O&M Permit will not be issued until the required actions are completed and documented.

NPDES Requirements

- The owner of an STS that has been issued coverage under the Ohio EPA General Permit to Discharge Wastewater from Household Sewage Treatment Systems under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) must comply with the requirements of the permit. Consult the permit for a full listing of requirements. A summary of the requirements includes:
 - 1) Obtain effluent samples annually for monitoring as required by the household general NPDES Permit. Effluent samples shall be collected by a registered service provider or SCHD in accordance with protocols established by the Ohio EPA. Effluent samples shall be collected in accordance with rule 3701-29-13 of the Administrative Code or as approved by the director from either the installed sampling port or the point of discharge for the STS installation. Results must be submitted to the SCHD.
 - 2) Maintenance, repair, servicing, or alteration of the system must be conducted as required to meet the action limits established by Ohio EPA when system effluent quality exceeds the established limits.

- 3) Owners that are not consistently able to meet the effluent quality standards shall work with the system manufacturer and SCHD to take steps necessary to bring the system into compliance with the established limits, and may include but is not limited to, the installation of an approved tertiary component, or additional approved treatment devices as approved by the Ohio Department of Health, or alteration or limitations on the quantity or quality of sewage discharged into the system.
- 4) The owner of the STS must maintain a service contract for the life of the system.
- 5) The owner of the STS must renew coverage under the HSTS NPDES General Permit for the life of the system.

Inspections & Sampling

- The Scioto County General Health District Resolutions for the O&M Program allow for registered service providers monitor, inspect, service, and sample the systems in Scioto County.
- SCHD does not currently intend to conduct routine O&M inspections, but reserves the right to conduct Non-Compliance Inspections through the authorization of ORC 3718.02 (A)(7) and OAC 3701-29-23 (A)&(B).

Service Providers

- Any individual or company that plans to perform inspections as a service provider must register with SCHD and meet the requirements established in OAC 3701-29.
- Service providers shall be certified by the system manufacturer for the systems they offer to provide service and maintenance.
- All records and information regarding a system's O&M shall be provided to SCHD within 60 days of any operation and maintenance inspection. If a registered service provider fails to properly submit their inspection reports, their status as a service provider will be brought in front of the Scioto County Board of Health. Additionally, registered service providers must notify SCHD within 30 days when a homeowner cancels their service contract.
- Homeowners desiring to conduct their own O&M inspections or service must take and pass the Ohio Sewage Contractor State Exam, and be certified by any applicable equipment manufacturer. The homeowner is then required to submit all applicable records.

Enforcement

- If a homeowner fails to comply NPDES requirements, enrollment, renewal, or does not provide proof of maintenance within the designated time frame, SCHD will be forced to conduct a Non-Compliance Inspection.
- If a homeowner fails to obtain the annual NPDES sampling, SCHD will also be forced to collect the required samples.
- ORC 3718.02 (A)(7) and OAC 3701-29-23 authorize the inspection and require the cost of the inspection and/or sampling to be paid by the owner of the STS that is being investigated.
- **Since SCHD does not have the workforce, schedule, or intent of profiting from these inspections and sampling, Non-compliance inspections and/or NPDES sampling will not be individually scheduled in advance.**
- These inspections **will not** provide any needed service to the system and are only intended to determine if the system is creating a public health nuisance. It is likely that the homeowner will still need to hire a service provider.
- **It is in the homeowner's best interest to have the inspection, sampling, and service conducted by a registered service provider.**
- The Non-Compliance Inspection fee*, NPDES Sampling fee*, O&M Renewal fee*, and/or O&M Enrollment Fee*, will be invoiced to the owner as applicable. **Refer to Fee Schedule*
- A 25% late fee will be assessed on any fees if not received on time.
- In accordance with ORC 3709.091 and ORC 319.281, unpaid fees, late fees, and any fee charged by the county auditor for placing the amount on the general tax list and duplicate and for the expenses of its collection will be placed on the general tax list and duplicate **shall be a lien on the real property** on which the household sewage treatment system or small flow on-site sewage treatment system is located from the date the amount was placed on the tax list and duplicate, and shall be charged and collected in the same manner as taxes on the list.
- The Ohio Revised Code provides other enforcement tools to encourage compliance with the sewage rules and O&M requirements.

Definitions:

Alteration: "Alter" or "Alteration" means the same as division (A) of section 3718.01 of the Ohio Revised Code. For the purposes of this chapter, the terms "alter" or "alteration" shall include, but not be limited to a change in the nature of influent waste strength; a change in system components; an expansion of the treatment or dispersal system, and may include a change in the volume of the daily design flow.

Component: An independent portion of the sewage treatment system. Sewage treatment system components include, but are not limited to, septic tanks, approved pretreatment products, tertiary treatment, and soil absorption

Effluent: Liquid flowing out of an STS component or device

EPA: Environmental Protection Agency

High Density Area: Defined by SCHD as having approximately 10 or more houses in an area that averages less than 1 acre per house

Household Sewage Treatment System (HSTS) or (STS): "Household sewage treatment system" or "HSTS" means any sewage treatment system, or part of such a system, that receives sewage from a single-family, two-family, or three-family dwelling...

Inspection: the on-site evaluation or analysis of the design, installation, and operation of a sewage treatment system

Lot: a legally recorded parcel of land

Manufacturer: any person that manufactures sewage treatment systems, or components or devices within a sewage treatment system

NPDES: National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

O&M: Operation and Maintenance

OAC: Ohio Administrative Code

Off-lot discharging: A sewage treatment system with effluent going into a ditch, stream, or onto the ground's surface. The effluent is not absorbed on the lot where it is generated.

ORC: Ohio Revised Code

Owner: the owner of the sewage treatment system or the property where a proposed sewage treatment system is to be installed

Pretreatment components: manufactured or built components of an STS that are designed to reduce contaminants, nutrients, or biological agents from sewage to produce a higher quality effluent. For the purposes of this chapter pretreatment component does not include a septic tank, but does include products designed to be placed within an existing septic tank.

Replacement STS: "Replacement" means the installation of a new sewage treatment system to replace an existing system. For the purposes of this chapter, the replacement or relocation of a soil absorption component or the treatment component providing the majority of the treatment shall be considered a replacement. For the purposes of this chapter the addition of a treatment component to a discharging system not currently under a NPDES permit shall be considered a replacement.

SCHD: Scioto County Health Department

Service provider: Any person who services, monitors, evaluates or samples, but does not install or alter, sewage treatment systems or gray water recycling systems. For the purpose of this chapter, service provider shall include a homeowner servicing his own system to meet the requirement of a service contract for product approval or demonstration of maintenance for an O&M program established in accordance with rule 3701-29-19 of the Administrative Code

Sewage: Liquid waste containing animal or vegetable matter in suspension or solution that originates from humans and human activities. Sewage includes liquids containing household chemicals in solution commonly discharged from a residence or from commercial, institutional, or other similar facilities.

Sewage treatment system or "STS": A household sewage treatment system, a small flow on-site sewage treatment system, or both, as applicable.

Update: Changing any discharging HSTS that was installed prior to January 1, 2007 that uses a system/manufacture model that has been approved by the director to meet the conditions of the general household NPDES permit issued by Ohio EPA absent post aeration, disinfection, and/or sampling mechanisms and can be updated to be an identical system to such approved by the director by installing these additional components

Rule 3701-29-19 | STS operation and maintenance management, and system owner education.

(A) The board of health shall develop a program for the administration of O&M management for STS and GWRS and system owner education in compliance with division (A)(7) of section 3718.02 of the Revised Code and this chapter.

(1) O&M management and system owner education is required for all systems installed or altered after the effective date of this chapter.

(2) Boards of health shall work with interested stakeholders to develop a timeline and process for phasing in O&M management for prior installed systems and should consider risk factors such as system age, complexity and risks to public health when establishing the criteria and process for phasing in prior installed systems, except as provided in paragraph (B) of this rule.

(3) All STS that have been issued coverage under the general household NPDES permit after January 1, 2007 shall be included in the O&M management program.

(B) Boards of health that have established a program prior to the effective date of this chapter for the monitoring or assessment of systems, are authorized to continue their program provided that the program allows a person to demonstrate the required maintenance of a system in lieu of a board of health inspection. Monitoring and assessment of STS may also be performed upon request for real estate inspections or as part of locally established real estate transfer programs.

(C) An O&M management program shall include but is not limited to the provisions of this rule and any additional provisions of an O&M management program established by the board of health shall not be considered as more stringent standards subject to division (B) of section 3718.02 of the Revised Code. O&M management programs shall include the following minimum components:

(1) Permit records organized by location providing a history of siting, design, installation, alteration, operation, monitoring, maintenance, and abandonment activities. The results of any O&M monitoring, service contracts, sampling, inspections or reporting required by this chapter shall be maintained in the permit record. All records and information regarding a system's operation and maintenance shall be provided to the board of health within sixty days of any operation and maintenance inspection.

(2) Demonstration of board of health and STS or GWRS owner compliance with operation permit requirements for system types as required in this chapter.

(3) Tracking of activities and requirements associated with the conditions of an operation permit or this chapter, including but not limited to:

(a) Dates and results of any inspections or maintenance service including the inspection required in paragraph (H) of rule [3701-29-09](#) of the Administrative Code.

(b) Time lines for the expiration and renewal of an operation permit as applicable.

(c) Record of owner compliance with the service contract or other maintenance requirements in accordance with this chapter and the operation permit conditions established in paragraph (I) of rule [3701-29-09](#) of the Administrative Code;

(d) Record of any related enforcement activities;

(e) Record of any water quality or other samples collected from the system; and

(f) A service provider or board of health may use electronic monitoring and tracking of system operation and maintenance.

(D) O&M in accordance with manufacturer's instructions shall be met when required as a condition of an operation permit, as part of a STS or GWRS product approval, or as otherwise required in this chapter. A person may demonstrate the required O&M of their system in lieu of having a board of health inspection conducted when an inspection is otherwise required. This may include a person securing a service contract or being certified for O&M service by a manufacturer. The board of health shall advise the owner of the ability to demonstrate required O&M through the use of a service contract or owner certification. The owner shall provide proof of servicing and maintenance appropriate to the STS or GWRS to the board of health that includes, but is not limited to:

(1) A copy of the system service report that is signed and dated by a registered service provider or owner who is certified by the manufacturer to service the installed STS or GWRS. Service providers shall notify the board of health when service contracts are not renewed;

(2) Service reports must include minimum information as required by the department for a specific technology or product, the board of health, and the manufacturer as applicable for every component of the system. Service checklists that provide a comprehensive listing of the minimum service requirements shall be used when applicable or available for a product or system type;

(3) Provide a copy of septic tank pumping receipts, tank and distribution box inspections, and cleaning of effluent filters as applicable; and

- (4) Any other information that demonstrates maintenance of the system as required by the operation permit.

This shall not preclude the board of health from conducting compliance inspections for the purpose of oversight of installers, service providers or septage haulers nor from requiring payment of an operation permit fee for O&M management.

(E) Owners of HSTS that have obtained coverage under the household general NPDES permit shall comply with the following O&M requirements:

(1) Obtain effluent samples for monitoring as required by the household general NPDES Permit. Effluent samples shall either be collected by the board of health, or if allowed by the board of health, a registered service provider in accordance with protocols established by the department or Ohio EPA. Effluent samples shall be collected in accordance with rule [3701-29-13](#) of the Administrative Code or as approved by the director from either the installed sampling port or the point of discharge for the STS installation;

(2) Maintenance, repair, servicing or alteration of the system as required to meet the action limits established by Ohio EPA when system effluent quality exceeds the limits established in the household general NPDES permit or more often as necessary to meet the action limits; and

(3) Owners of HSTS that have obtained coverage under the household general NPDES permit, and are not consistently able to meet the effluent quality standards, shall work with the system manufacturer and the board of health to take steps necessary to bring the system into compliance with the established limits, and may include, but is not limited to, the installation of an approved tertiary component or additional approved treatment devices as approved by the department of health, or alteration or limitations on the quantity or quality of sewage discharged into the system.

(F) A board of health may establish a household sewage treatment district in accordance with division (A)(14) of section [3718.02](#) of the Revised Code and the following minimum criteria and procedures:

(1) A household sewage treatment district established by a board of health shall provide a responsive approach to prevent or resolve sewage treatment problems from HSTS within an established district;

(2) When establishing a household sewage treatment district the board of health shall by formal resolution provide in writing the authority, purpose, scope, and details of the district management program including any fees;

(3) In advance of the adoption of a resolution establishing a household sewage treatment district, the board of health shall provide public notice in a newspaper of general circulation and shall inform all affected homeowners by mail at least ninety days in advance of the adoption of the resolution; and

(4) The board of health may enter into a contract with any entity to administer a household sewage treatment district management program.

(G) The board of health shall promote compliance with this chapter through educational outreach including but not limited to the following:

(1) Providing information to STS owners on the type of STS they own and how it functions, and how to manage, maintain and care for their STS to ensure proper system performance and sustainability.

(2) Help ensure that the STS owner is provided with O&M instructions and service reporting requirements.

(3) Provide information to system owners on how to access the department of health and manufacturer internet sites for O&M instructions as required by division (F) of section [3718.05](#) of the Revised Code, or upon written request, directly provide a copy of these O&M instructions.

(H) The board of health may provide owners with information on financial assistance resources, and may promote or participate in local and state financial assistance programs to support STS repair and replacement or connection to sanitary sewers and STS abandonment including, but not limited to, the following:

(1) Complete a HSTS management plan to access state revolving loan funds.

(2) Establish a local revolving or low interest loan program.

(3) Encourage targeted community development funding.