NEBRASKA

DEPT. OF WATER, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT

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# Onsite Wastewater: Permitting Requirements

## General Permits

Most onsite wastewater treatment (OWT) systems are constructed under a General Permit and do not require a construction/operating permit from the State of Nebraska. To be authorized under a General Permit, the system must be constructed by a certified professional according to all General Permit conditions and must be registered within 45 days of construction completion. General Permits include:

- GTS220000 Septic Tank and Subsurface Leach Field
- GHT220000 Holding Tank
- GL220000 Wastewater Lagoon
- GMS220000 Mound System*

*Note: Mound systems may only be installed under the General Permit by a certified professional holding a Mound Endorsement.

## Construction/Operating Permits

When an onsite wastewater treatment system cannot be authorized under a General Permit, the owner must obtain a construction permit from the Department prior to start of the work and an operating permit from the Department prior to use of the system. The construction permit and the operating permit for a single system are covered by one application.

The construction, reconstruction, alteration, or modification of an onsite wastewater system requires a construction/operating permit if any of the following conditions apply:

- The design flow is greater than 1,000 gallons per day;
- The design flow includes *any* non-domestic wastewater;
- The system may endanger human health or cause pollution; and/or
- The system cannot meet all the provisions for design, setback distances and reserve area prescribed in the general permits, including:
  - Soil percolation rates slower than 60 minutes per inch;
  - Less than 4-foot separation from bottom of trench to groundwater; and
  - Construction of a household lagoon on a lot of less than three acres.

Non-domestic wastewater includes processing waste from any industrial, agricultural, or commercial establishment, automotive or industrial chemicals or petroleum products, wastewater from a restaurant or food preparation facility, and/or water carrying animal waste.

Examples of facilities that may need to obtain a permit as a result of the quantity and/or quality of wastewater generated include:

- Trailer Parks/Campgrounds;
- Laboratories;
- Restaurants;
- Dog Kennels/Veterinary Clinics;
- Wineries;
- Motor Vehicle and Equipment Repair and Maintenance Shops; and
- Churches

In addition to the requirements of Title 124 and General Permits, OWT systems designed to receive waste from 20 or more people, have design flow greater than 1,000 gallons per day, or receive non-domestic wastes may be subject to Title 122 - Rules and Regulations for Underground Injection and Mineral Production Wells.

## Temporary Modifications

A temporary modification to a failed onsite wastewater treatment system may be performed without obtaining a permit, if the modification is to prevent a surface discharge and/or reduce a threat to public health.

The temporary modification must be registered with the Department. A written description must accompany the registration which:

- States that a temporary modification was made; and
- Describes the problem that caused the discharge and the reason why the temporary modification was made.

A system with a temporary modification is not to be operated for more than 4 months without Department approval.