



Ohio Department of Health

Bureau of Environmental Health
and Radiation Protection
Residential Water and
Sewage Program

"To protect and improve the health of all Ohioans"

Responsibilities of a Household Sewage Treatment System Authorized Under a General NPDES Permit

July 2017

The Ohio EPA issued the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES) to provide a process for replacement household sewage systems that discharge treated sewage effluent (non-soil based systems) to gain compliance with the provisions of the Federal Clean Water Pollution Control Act. The complete terms and limitations of this General Permit can be found on the [Final General Permit page](#) of Ohio EPA's website.

The General Permit defines the limitations of coverage for eligible systems and identify conditions where discharging systems cannot be installed. The local board of health has jurisdiction where a new or replacement household sewage treatment system is located and to determine eligibility of coverage under the permit. The General Permit requires new and replacement discharging systems to be permitted and installed under a local health district permit.

New or replacement discharging systems must meet certain effluent water quality standards defined in the General Permit. Owners of these systems must obtain on-going service and maintenance for the life of the system, and conduct annual water quality sampling to demonstrate compliance with the permit standards. The Ohio Department of Health, with the recommendation of the Sewage Treatment Systems Technical Advisory Committee, reviews and approves sewage treatment systems and components that treat household wastewater to meet the requirements of the General Permit.

Steps to Install a Replacement Discharging Sewage Treatment System

1. **Complete a Site Evaluation** - A property owner with a discharging system that needs to be replaced should begin by contacting the local health district. The local health district staff will then work with the property owner, and possibly a soil evaluator, to conduct a site evaluation to determine if a soil based system can be installed on the lot.
2. **Determine eligibility for coverage under the General Permit** - If the site evaluation shows that an on-lot or soil based system cannot be installed, the local health district will determine whether the property is eligible for coverage under the General Permit for a discharging system.
3. **Submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) to Ohio EPA** - You and your local health department will need to fill out your portions of the NOI, then you the homeowner will need to sign the NOI and mail it along with the designated fee. This information will be reviewed by Ohio EPA to determine if the property meets the requirements for a replacement discharging system under General NPDES Permit. The NOI [instructions](#) and [application](#) are available here and on Ohio EPA's website.
4. **Obtain a Notice of Coverage** - The notice of coverage is valid for a five year cycle and must be renewed at the end of the five year cycle. This document should be maintained with all other system information.
5. **Apply for an Installation Permit** - A copy of the notice of coverage must be provided to the local health district to obtain an installation permit. System owners and designers must select an approved discharging system for installation and work with a locally registered sewage treatment systems contractor. A [list of household sewage treatment systems approved for discharge](#) is available on the ODH website.

Responsibilities and Requirements for System Owners and Local Health Districts

The General Permit define the responsibilities of ownership and maintenance of a NPDES system.

1. Effluent Quality Sampling – The General Permit requires annual testing of the effluent quality. System owners are responsible for ensuring that a sample is collected and reported to the local health district. Samples must be taken in compliance with and meet the effluent monitoring requirements as listed in the General Permit.

Samples must be collected and tested annually for:

- Total Suspended Solids (TSS)
- Ammonia (summer or winter limits--depending on the time of year sample is taken)
- Five Day Carbonaceous Biochemical Oxygen Demand (CBOD)
- Dissolved Oxygen (DO)
- E. coli
- Chlorine

Annual effluent sample test results must be reported to the local health district which is required to review the results and ensure the system is meeting discharge limits. Some local health districts may collect these samples as part of the operation permit issued to the system owner. The service provider for a system may offer sample collection as a separate service or as part of the service contract and report the data to the local health district. System owners should contact the local health district to determine the local sampling and reporting process. **Failure to report annual testing is a violation of the General Permit and Ohio Revised Code 6111 and could result in penalties and loss of coverage under the permit.**

2. **Service Contract for the Discharging System** - The owner of a discharging household sewage treatment system that receives coverage under the General Permit is required to maintain a service contract for the life of the system. ODH approval for these systems and the General Permit's conditions require that a service contract be maintained to ensure that the system operates properly and does not discharge untreated sewage effluent. Local health districts are responsible to ensure that system owners maintain a service contract for their system. Local health districts may fulfill this obligation through issuance of an operation permit, and may require a fee. Some local health districts will accept the service provider report in lieu of an inspection conducted by the local health district. Operation and maintenance data for each approved discharging system are listed by manufacturer on the [Approved Pretreatment Components](#) page on the ODH website.

Where can I get more information?

Ohio Department of Health
Residential Sewage Program
246 N. High Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: (614) 644-7551
Fax: (614) 466-4556
BEH@odh.ohio.gov