

Buying and Selling Houses on Septic System and Beyond!

Workshop for Real Estate Agents

Public Health—Seattle and King County

On-site Sewage System (OSS) Program

December 6th, 2023

Public Health
Seattle & King County 

Contents

- Introduction
- Launch of Community Septic Team in Vashon
- Record searching
- Selling a house on septic system: Time of Sales Review Process
- Buying a house on septic system: Escrow, Buyer's responsibility
- Building permit: Public Health's Review on Building Permit
- Resource navigation
- Questions and Answers

Introduction

- Doug Jones: Health & Environmental Investigator
- Alora Mcgavin: Health & Environmental Investigator
- Eunbi Lee: Education and Outreach Specialist
- Anne Atwell: Community Septic Team (CST) Manager
- Groundwater Protection Committee: CST advisor

Jargons!

OSS: On-site Sewage System (“septic system”)

Building App: Building Application (for remodels)

Site App: Site Application (for new homes and OSS)

TOS: Time of Sale

OSM: On-site Sewage System Maintainer
 (“maintainer”)

Investigators: Public Health officers

Why are we here?



I want to better support new home buyers at Vashon!

I wish to know more about processes to better support sellers.

I want to know who to contact if I have questions!

I don't want to scare people away!



Launch: Community Septic Team in Vashon



- Like a band-aid: this is the place where residents can contact for issues that need immediate assistance!



- Long-term goals: people can consult about their long-term home projects that may require septic system alterations

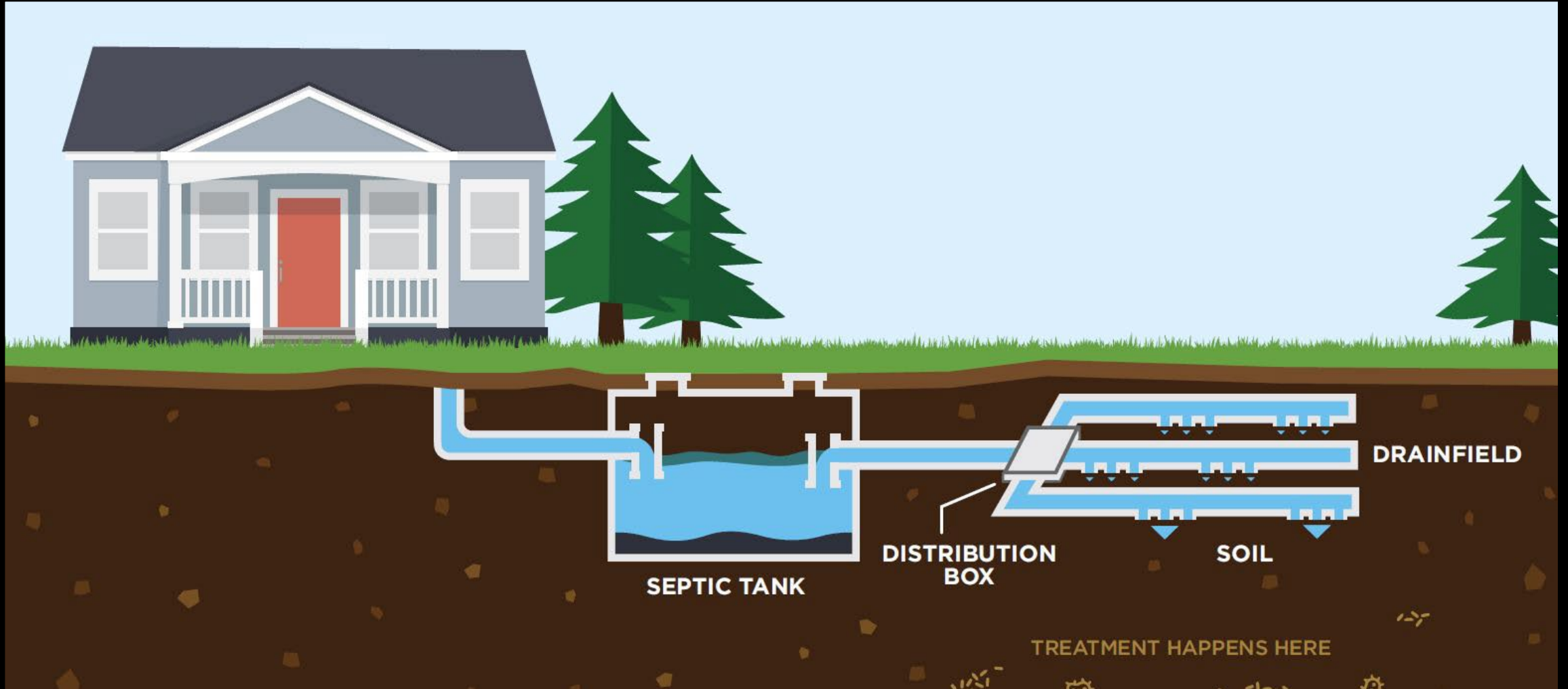


- Learn from real experiences! People will share their experiences about septic system success, misery, and creative solutions!



- Collaborating with local experts in water, Groundwater Protection Committee!

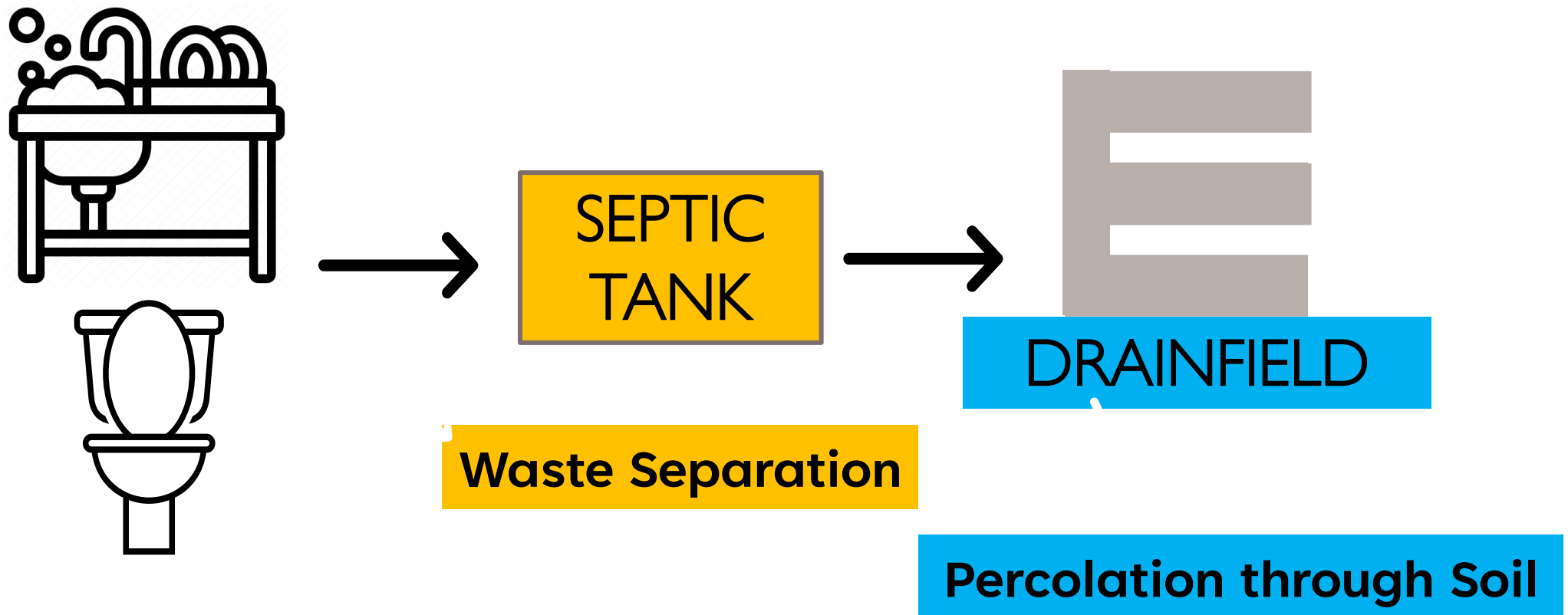
Questions? Contact Anne Atwell at anne@anneatwellcommunications.com



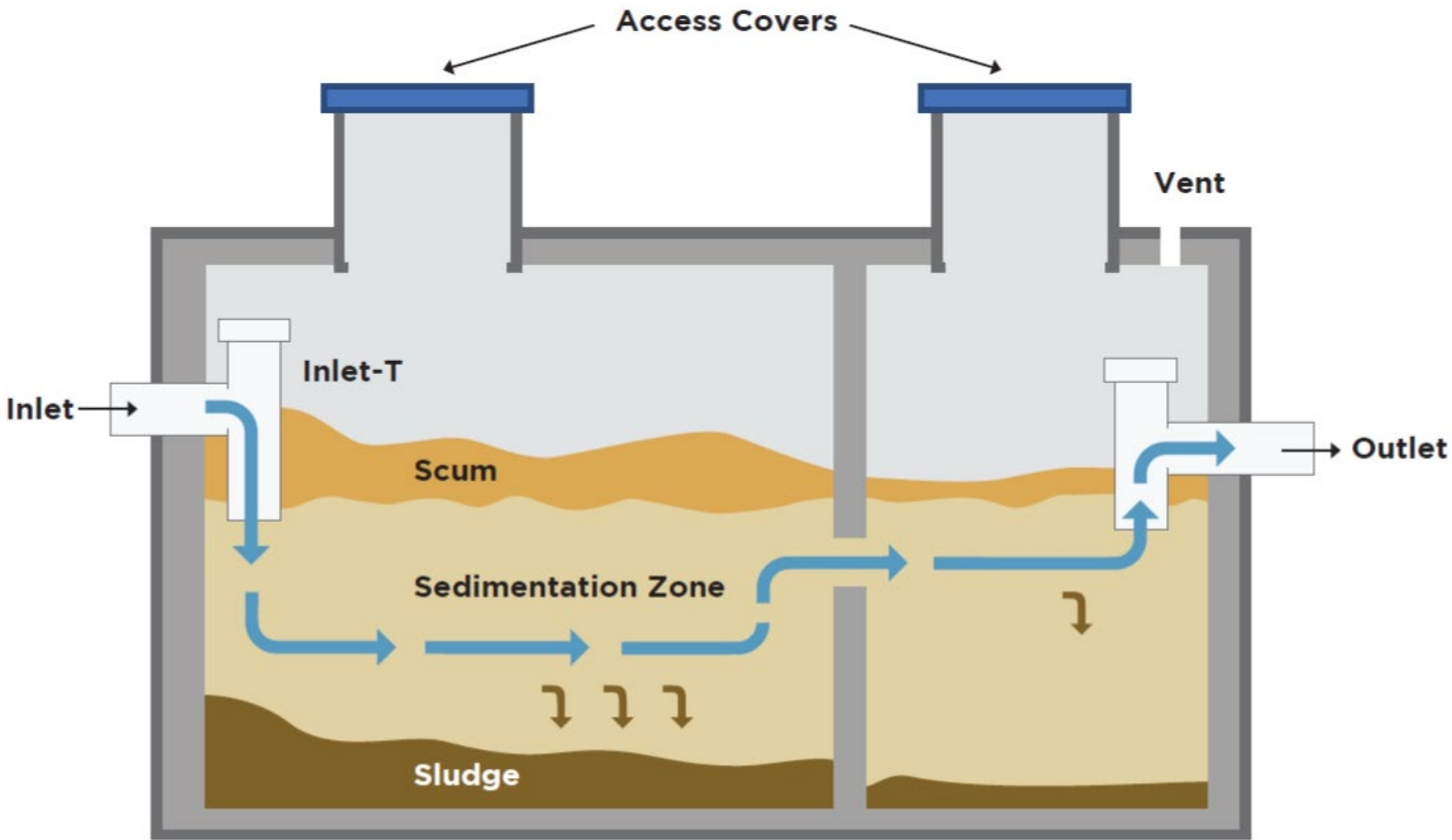
How does an on-site sewage system work?

What is an on-site sewage system?

On-site sewage systems, also known as OSS or septic systems, collect, treat and dispose of household sewage.



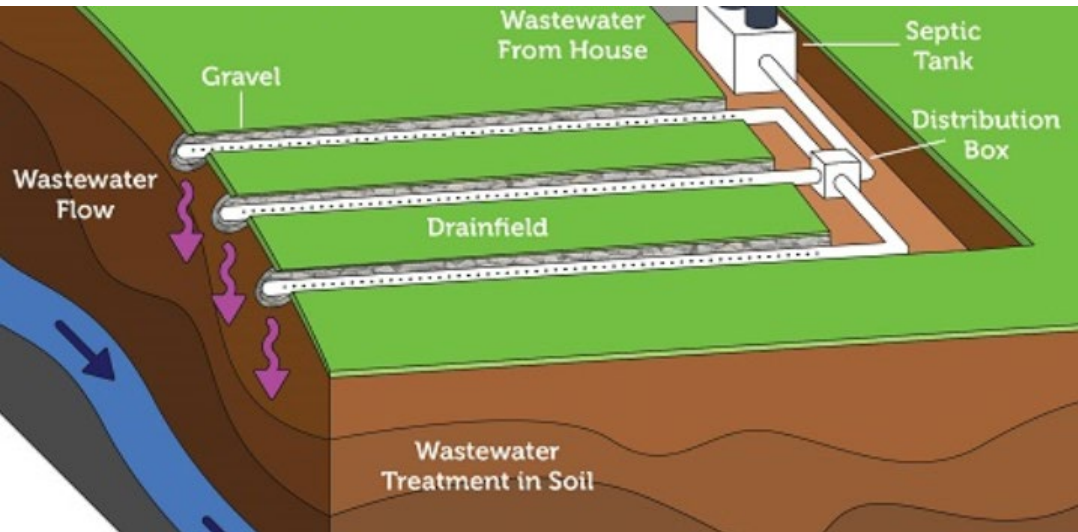
SEPTIC TANK



Solid waste (sludge) and grease/oils (scum) are separated and broken down by microorganisms.

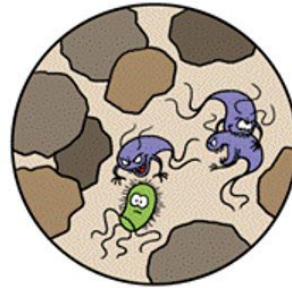
Pump on a regular basis!

DRAINFIELD



US EPA

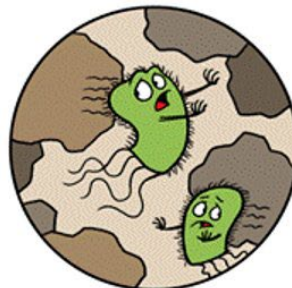
About 60-80% of wastewater treatment happens in SOIL!
Drainfield maintenance is very important for final and critical wastewater treatment.



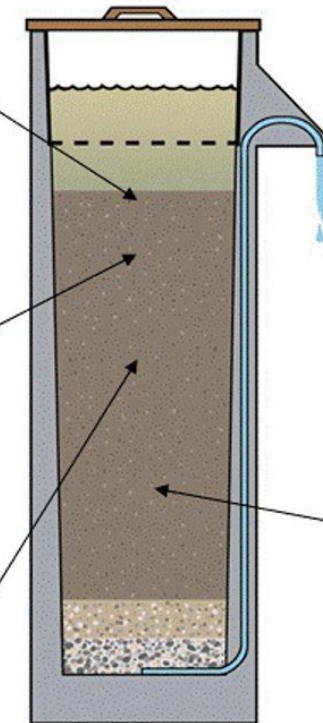
PREDATION
Micro-organisms in the biolayer eat some pathogens.



TRAPPING
Some pathogens get trapped in the sand.



ADSORPTION
Some pathogens get stuck to the sand grains.



NATURAL DEATH
Some pathogens die because they do not have enough food, not enough air, or from old age.

Why is septic maintenance important?

Septic system helps disperse wastewater **EVENLY** to the ground for filtering and treatment.

Septic system care is the easiest way to **SAVE** money in a long run.

If a septic system does not work properly, untreated wastewater may pose harm in the safety and health of residents.



Shigella



Norovirus



E.Coli

Septic record search: why and how?

- kingcounty.gov/SepticRecords

- Records on new construction, repairs to failing systems
- Completed septic site design applications and building application reviews
- If you do not find a “septic record” or “record drawing”, email as-built.help@kingcounty.gov with the parcel number and street address

- OnlineRME (Responsible Management Entity)

- Routine inspections, pumpout reports
- Time of Sales Inspection report

How can I find out what type of system I own?

1. Click “Search septic system as-built drawing records”

HOME / PUBLIC HEALTH – SEATTLE & KING COUNTY / ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH / ON-SITE SEWAGE/SEPTIC SYSTEMS

On-site sewage/septic system program

The Public Health – Seattle & King County On-site Sewage/Septic System Program helps make sure that over 85,000 sewage/septic systems in Seattle are safe. Sewage/septic systems treat wastewater when homes and buildings are not connected to public sewer systems. We also provide permitting and educational services for owners of septic systems, and certifications for some septic professionals.

Resources for homeowners and residents

Find sewage/septic information for homeowners and residents.

Resources for On-site Sewage/Septic system professionals

Professionals need Certificates of Competency to work on and maintain septic systems. Learn more about becoming certified or renewing your certification.

Resources for real estate professionals

Find sewage/septic information pertaining to real estate.

Search on-site sewage/septic system records

The online database has King County's official records. You can also find the record drawing search utility, King County iMap, and other resources.

2. Click on kingcounty.gov/SepticRecords

Search on-site sewage/septic system records

An online search tool to look up records for on-site sewage/septic systems. Records include site designs, historic inspection reports, and as-built record drawings.


Statewide OSS rule revision process | The Washington State Board of Health is revising the state rule, including how to comment, on the state Department of Health website.

Search for your septic records using this new tool: kingcounty.gov/SepticRecords

You can find this information in the Time of Sales report!

3. Write Address or Parcel Number in the search bar.

Septic and Group B Records



Public Health
Seattle & King County

How can I search for previous inspection records?

SEARCHING FOR REPORTS FROM PREVIOUS INSPECTIONS:

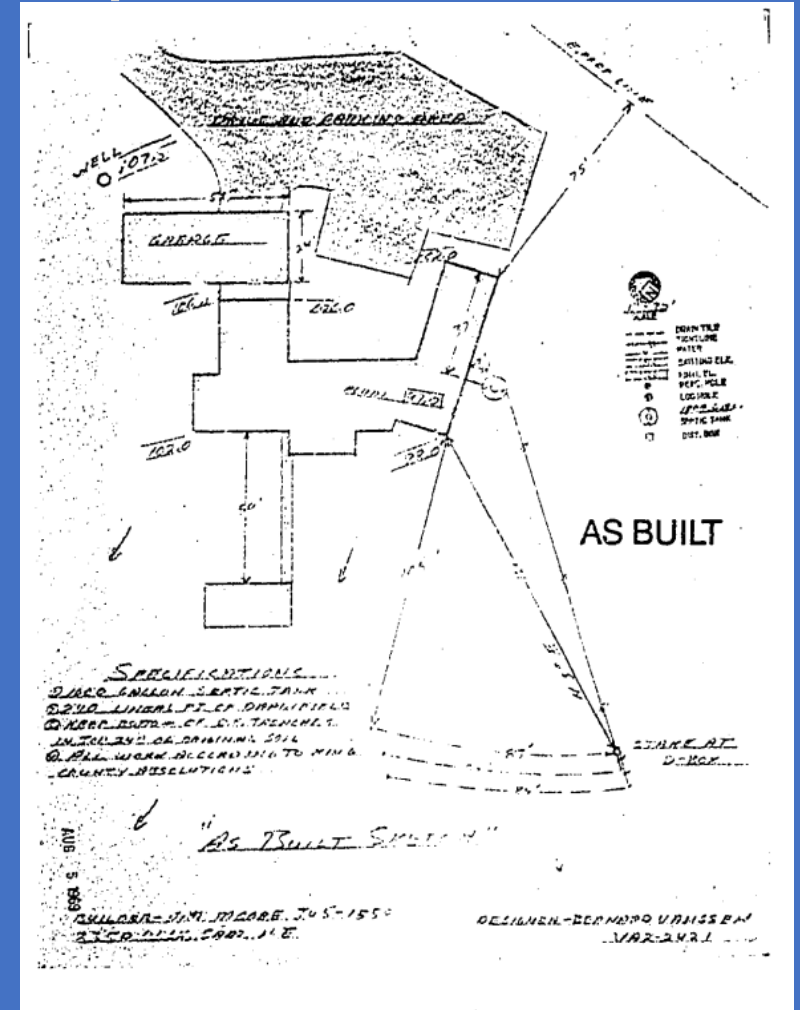
- 1 Go to www.onlinermc.com/contractorsearchproperty.aspx.
- 2 Type in your address or tax ID (parcel number).

The screenshot shows a web form titled 'Site Searches'. It includes dropdown menus for 'Country' (United States), 'State' (Washington), and 'County' (King). There are input fields for 'Street Number' and 'Street Name'. A 'Search For' dropdown is set to 'Site Address'. A 'Submit Search' button is visible. A note states: 'For STREET NAME Do NOT enter Street Direction (E,W,N,S) or Street Suffix (St., Ave., Blvd., etc.)'. There is also an 'Exact Match Only' checkbox.

- 3 Click on 'Service History' to see pumping and inspection reports, or click 'Application History' to review previous Time of Sale Inspection Reports.

The screenshot shows a vertical navigation menu with the following items: 'Site Search', 'Site Information', 'Site Details', 'Contracts', 'Uploads', 'Site Work History', 'Service History' (with an orange arrow pointing to it), 'Application History' (with an orange arrow pointing to it), and 'Submit Work'.

Example of an as-built drawing



Inspection report submitted by a maintainer

- Site Reports
- Submit Work
- Alarm Call
- Application
- Correspondence
- Septic Inspection
- Septic Pumping
- Pump Truck Dumping
- Septic Sampling
- FOG Service

onlineRME™
RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT ENTITY

Help | My Account | Contact

Property Search | Contracts | Work History | Reports | Calendar | VENIS Export

Logout

Site Information

- Property Details
- Contact Information
- Septic Components
- Contracts
- Work Notes
- Sampling Parameters
- Operational Permits
- Dumping Zones
- FOG Components

Site Work History

Schedule

Site Reports

Submit Work

- Alarm Call
- Application
- Correspondence
- Septic Inspection

SITE NAME: GENERAL SYSTEM TYPE: Standard Gravity
SITE ADDRESS: 109 Austin Drive NE MAX SITE FLOW: 360 (GPD)
OWNER: Bob Smith (360)-234-4567

Septic System Inspection Report Submittal

Onsite Sewage: Inspection

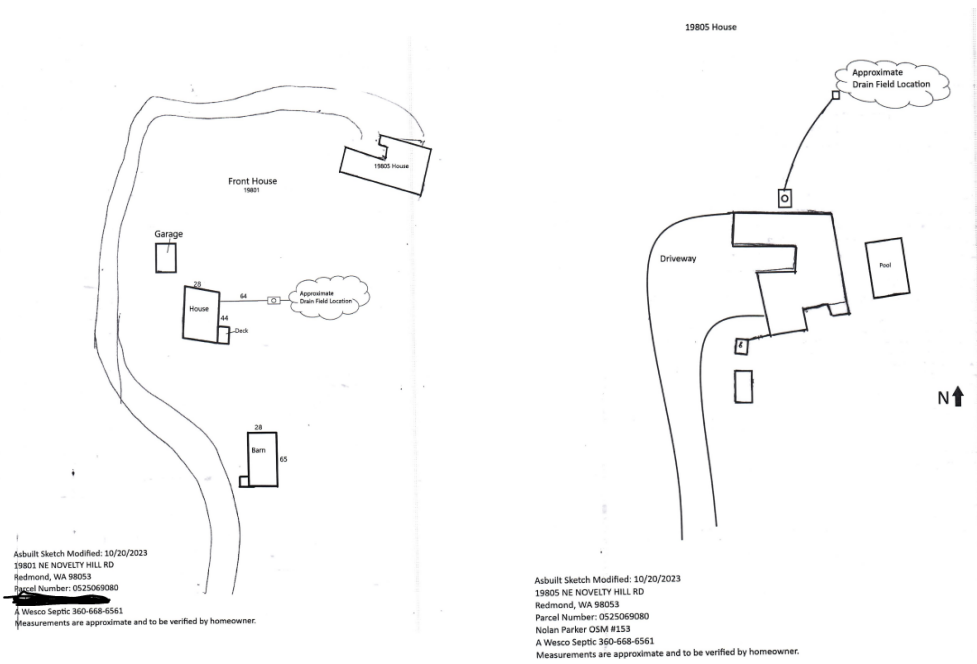
Inspection Date: 08/06/2013 Inspection Type: PROPERTY SALE NEXT >>

 [Wastewater Treatment System Calculations](#)

Before moving on... let's be clear on some words

Site sketch

Maintainers can create for TOS to show current site conditions

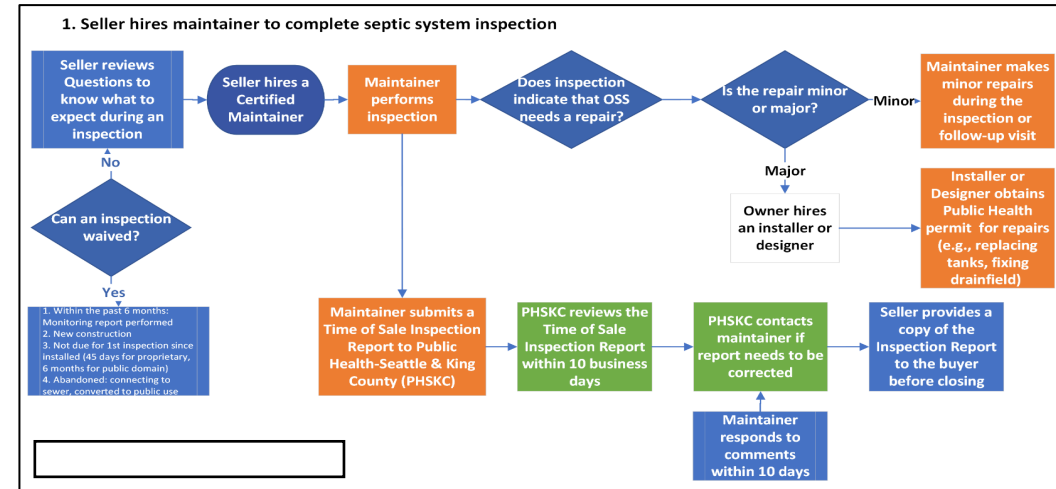


Record drawing ("as-built")

More official document. Designers identifies all the components' locations, distances

Seller's duty 1: Time of sale inspection

1. Seller hires a certified OSM (maintainer)
2. Maintainer performs inspection
3. Maintainer submits a Time of Sale Inspection report to Public Health for review
4. Public Health reviews the Time of Sale Inspection Report within 10 business days
5. If there is an issue from the inspection, owner addresses it. (Either buyer or seller)
6. If there is an issue or deficiency in the report, maintainer has 10 days to make modifications or comment.
7. Seller provides a copy of the inspection report to the buyer before closing.

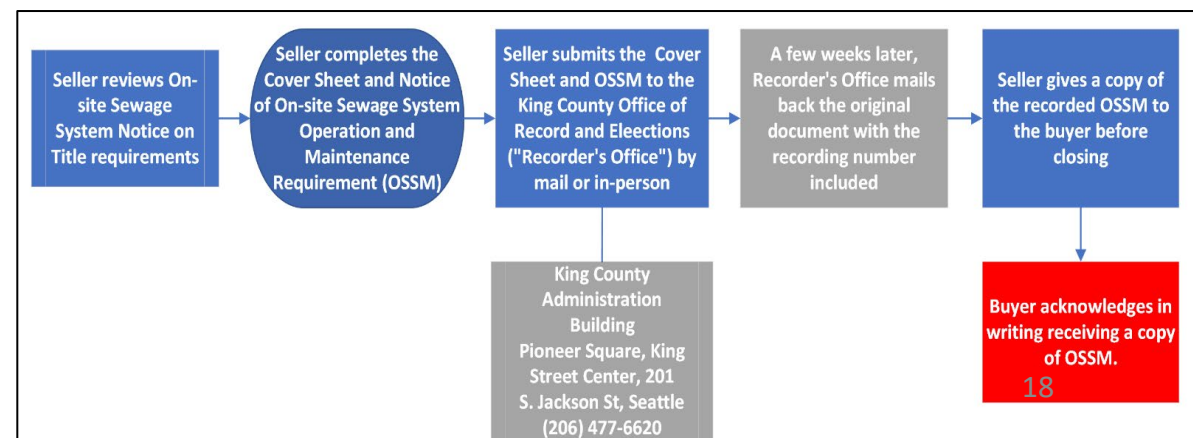


When is an inspection waived?

1. Within the past 6 months: Monitoring report performed
2. New construction
3. Not due for 1st inspection since installed (45 days for proprietary, 6 months for public domain)
4. Abandoned: connecting to sewer, converted to public use

Seller's duty 2: Notice on Title

- New system: owner records notice on title as part of approval process.
 1. Seller completes and submits the "Notice of On-site Sewage System Operation and Maintenance Requirement (OSSM)" and the cover sheet to King County Office of Record and Elections ("recorder's office")
 2. Once receiving the title, seller gives a copy of the recorded OSSM to the buyer before closing
 3. Buyer acknowledges in writing receiving a copy of OSSM.
- Existing system:
 - Seller gives a copy of the recorded OSSM to the buyer before the property is sold or transferred and has the buyer acknowledge in writing receiving a copy



Buyer's duty: fee payment

3. Buyer pays fee



Environmental Health Services
Phone: 206-477-8050 (answered until 3:00pm)
Fax: 206-296-9792



What is Septic Maintenance?

- Responsibility of a Homeowner with a Septic System
- Why is this Important?:
 - Prevent sewage surfacing or backing up into the house
 - Extend the life of the septic system and ensure it is working properly
 - Protects the environment and public health from untreated sewage contamination
- Pump out septic tank usually every 3-5 years

Frequency of Routine Inspections (may or may not include a tank pump out)

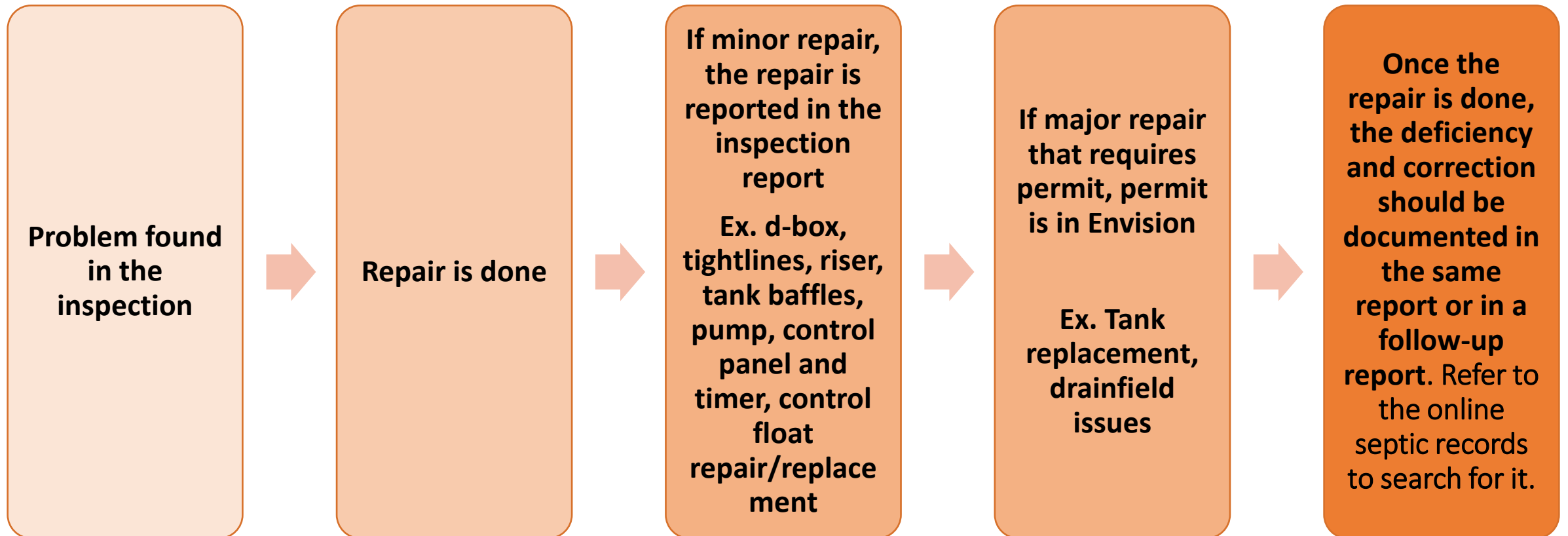
	Gravity System ⁴	Public Domain Technology ²	Proprietary Technology ^{3,5}	Commercial and Food Establishment	Non-Discharging Toilets ⁶
Initial¹ Inspection	6 months	6 months	45 days	45 days	N/A
Regular Inspection frequency	Every 3 years	Annually	Every 6 months	Annually or 6 months Depending on Technology used	Annually
Who May Perform the Inspection	Owner or Licensed Maintainer or Licensed OSS Pumper	Licensed Maintainer	Licensed Maintainer	Licensed Maintainer	Owner

FAQ 1) Public Health's responses to deficiencies with report

Deficiency with report?	Failures?	Remember!	Issues with encroachment?
Public Health: Put it on hold	Property owner is required to get a permit for a repair/replacement	Deficiencies do not prevent property transfer, but completed report must be provided to buyer before sale	*Encroachment: structure, garden, driveway is on a portion of the drainfield or reserve area
OSM makes modifications on the drawing, report, or application			OSM updates a site sketch
For minor repairs, OSM has 5 days to document on an inspection report and submit an operation/performance monitoring report			Public Health makes a comment

FAQ 2) Problem, Repair, Report?

When a problem is found in the inspection report and a repair is done, where can we locate the permit that was issued for the repair? Is the deficiency removed from the report?



FAQ 3) TOS: Inspection, Pumping?

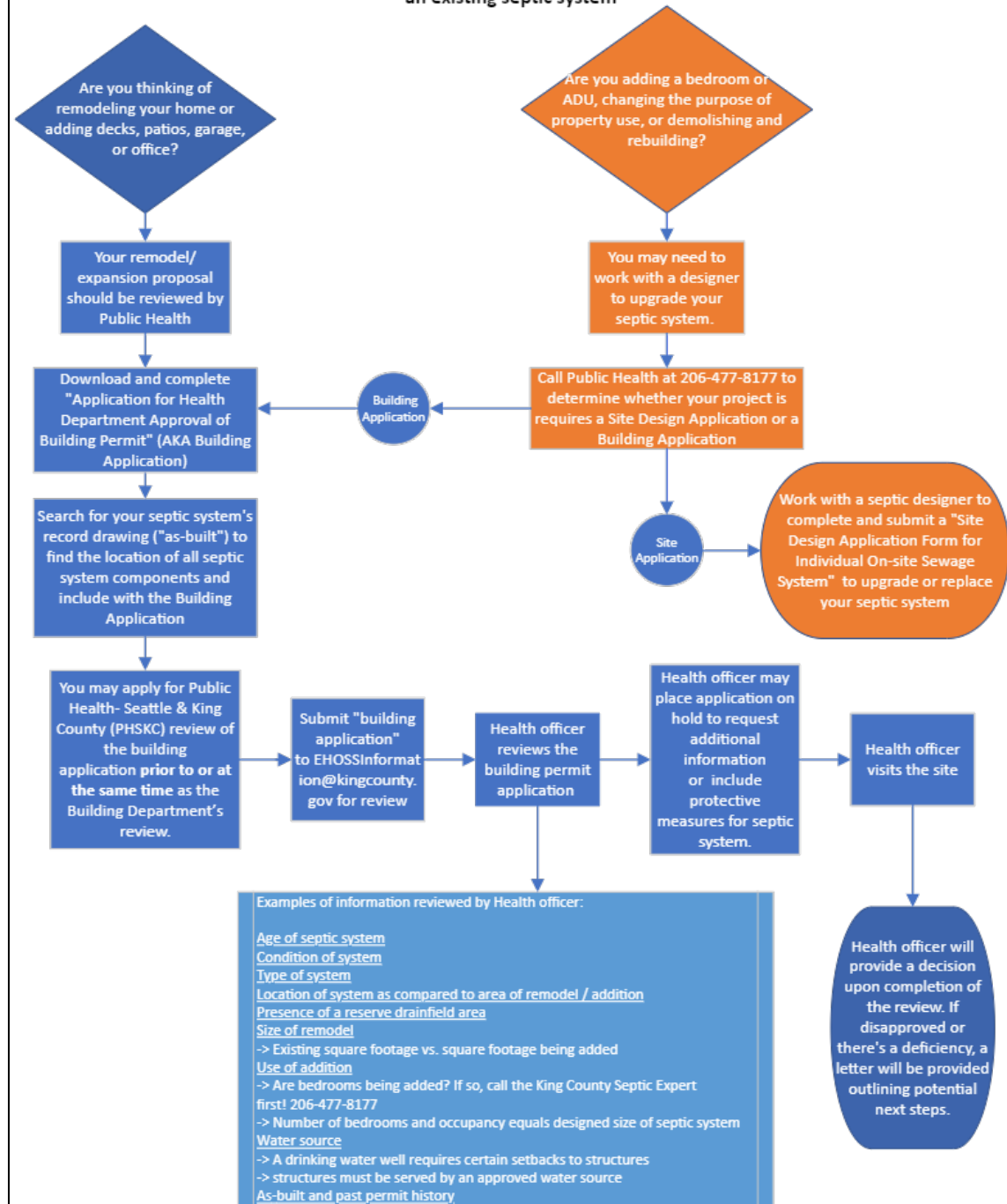
- If an OSM company both inspects the system and then pumps....are there two reports?
 - Pumping reports can be included as additional documents in the TOS report.
 - Pumpers are required to provide a pumping log/report via onlineRME.

Building Application Review: So your client wants to remodel

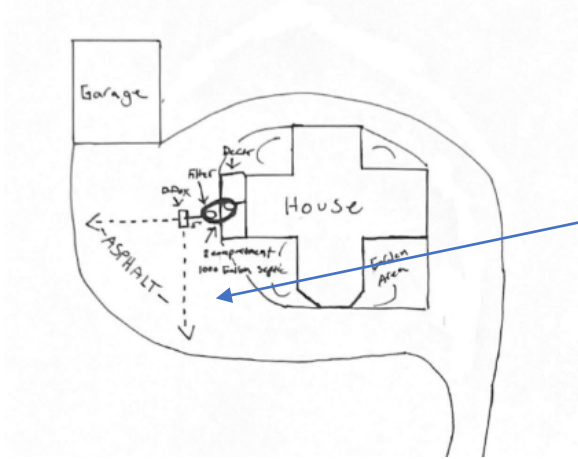
- Building application vs Site application?
- Building Application = remodel or addition to existing home that is not anticipated to have a significant impact on the septic system
- For new homes, adding bedrooms, demo/rebuilt or other significant changes: hire a designer for a “site design application” for a new or upgraded septic system
 - Some other scenarios also require site application

Health Department Building Application Review Process

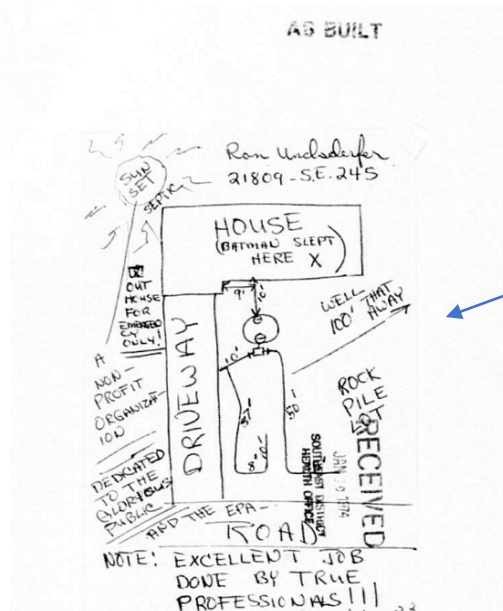
Overview of Health Department Permit Application Review Process for remodel and addition to property with an existing septic system



Examples – Septic Yellow Flags to look out for Future Remodels



- Drainfield or reserve is compromised
- Septic system is VERY OLD (50+ years, typically don't have record drawing)



- No Reserve area
- Previous construction without septic permit

Adding ADU, bedroom, major addition to old septic

- **If people want to add bedrooms or do any major addition/remodel?**

→ Call Public Health at 206-477-8177 before submitting the building application!

→ Why? Septic upgrade or replacement may be required depending on the scale of remodel. Septic Systems are designed based on the number of bedrooms in a home and the potential occupancy.

Remodel Requiring a New or Upgraded Septic System

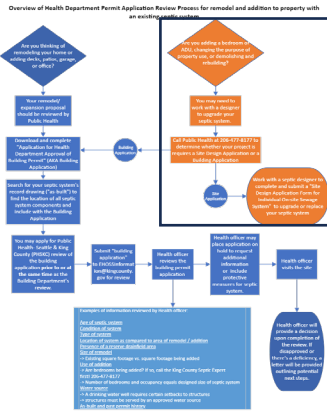


You may need to work with a designer to upgrade your septic system.

Call Public Health at 206-477-8177 to determine whether your project is requires a Site Design Application or a Building Application



Work with a septic designer to complete and submit a "Site Design Application Form for Individual On-site Sewage System" to upgrade or replace your septic system



Resources for Real Estate Agents

www.kingcounty.gov/oss

[HOME](#) / [PUBLIC HEALTH – SEATTLE & KING COUNTY](#) / [ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH](#) / [ON-SITE SEWAGE/SEPTIC SYSTEMS](#)

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Resources for real estate professionals

Find sewage/septic system resources for real estate professionals.

[Property sales and transfers](#)

[Educational septic system downloads](#)

[Permitting for subdivisions and boundary line adjustments](#)

[Search septic system as-built drawing records](#)

King County's Financial Resources

Craft3 Clean Water Loans



- Low interest loan for septic system replacement when your septic system is:
 - at least 25 years old; failing
 - Or you've been contacted by local health officials; you are under orders to fix your system.

Habitat for Humanity Home Repair Program

- Habitat's Home Repair Program works with homeowners who need help with critical repairs that will ease health and safety issues. Any King County property owner can apply for financial help for a septic repair.



USDA Rural Housing Service Program

- Also known as the Section 504 Home Repair program, this provides loans to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve, or modernize their homes.

King County's Financial Resources- King County Housing Repair Program

King County Housing Repair Program

interest-free loan and emergency grant services to low- and moderate-income homeowners in King County.

LOANS	GRANTS
<p>Deferred Payment Loan Program</p> <p>This program provides financing for the total cost of eligible and necessary repairs up to the maximum loan amount.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum loan \$25,000.00 0% interest No monthly payments Repaid at the time the home is sold or title transferred, home is refinanced, or is no longer used as your primary residence 	<p>Matching Funds Program</p> <p>King County provides one-half of the funds and the homeowner <i>MATCHES</i> the funding with a loan from a local lender or private funds. Repair costs exceeding \$50,000.00 will be the total responsibility of the homeowner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum County loan \$25,000.00 0% interest No monthly payments Repaid at the time the home is sold or title transferred, home is refinanced, or is no longer used as your primary residence 
	<p>Unlike loans, grants are not repaid. Eligibility for a grant is determined by a lower gross annual income than a loan.</p> <p>Emergency Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum emergency grant amount \$6,000.00 Available for life threatening repair needs in owner-occupied homes. <p>Mobile Home Grants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum grant amount \$8,000.00 Available for mobile homeowners <i>Without</i> ownership in the land on which the mobile home is located.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligibility is determined by gross annual income of **ALL** household members.

Family Size	Maximum Gross Income to be eligible for:	
	Loan Assistance	Grant Assistance
1	\$66,750	\$45,300
2	\$76,250	\$51,800
3	\$85,800	\$58,250
4	\$95,300	\$64,700
5	\$102,950	\$69,900
6	\$110,550	\$75,100
7	\$118,200	\$80,250
8	\$125,800	\$85,450

Other eligibility requirements include:

- One year residency
- Owner-occupied
- Asset limitations
- Sufficient home equity



Questions?
Thank you!

Doug Jones Doug.Jones@kingcounty.gov
Alora McGavin amcgavin@kingcounty.gov
Eunbi Lee eulee@kingcounty.gov