

## Alteration Permit for a Septic System: Procedures & Criteria



### Department of Planning and Development

525 NE 4th Street  
McMinnville, OR 97128  
Phone: (503) 434-7516  
Fax: (503) 434-7544  
[www.co.yamhill.or.us/plan](http://www.co.yamhill.or.us/plan)

Visit DEQ's Web Page at:

<http://waterquality.deq.state.or.us/wq/onsite/onsite.htm>

### Where is a Septic System needed?

In areas where no sewer service is available, an On-site Sewage Treatment and Disposal System, also known as a *septic system*, is needed to treat and properly dispose of sewage, which includes grey water.

### Why are permits required?

The permitting process ensures that septic systems are sited and constructed so that human health and the environment are protected.

### What is an Alteration Permit?

An *Alteration Construction-Installation Permit* is usually what is needed to alter an existing septic system for a single family dwelling or a system that has a projected sewage flow less than 2,500 gallons per day. An Alteration Permit application packet can be obtained from the Yamhill County Dept. of Planning & Development office.

There are *Minor* and *Major* Alteration permits. Minor Alteration permits are for changes to a system that do not involve the drainfield. Major Alteration permits are for expansions of an existing system that involve the drainfield or adding a treatment unit such as a sandfilter. Permits are valid for 1 year, and for an additional fee they may be renewed or reinstated if it takes longer to complete construction and installation.

Major alterations for increases in flow over 300 gallons per day or greater than 50% of the system capacity must be treated in the same manner as a new septic system. This includes the requirement for the completion of a favorable *Site Evaluation* prior to obtaining a permit. For more information, see the "Site Evaluation Procedures and Criteria for Septic System Approval" fact sheet.

If you have questions about permits for alterations to larger or more complex systems, contact the Yamhill County Dept. of Planning & Development office.

### What are the permit fees?

Permit fees are different for Minor and Major

Alteration Permits and are determined by what needs to be altered, the type of system and the amount of sewage flow. The fee schedule can be obtained from the Yamhill County Dept. of Planning & Development office. To obtain specific fee information for a particular application, please call the Yamhill County Dept. of Planning & Development office.

### Permit Criteria

The suitability of a proposed alteration of an existing septic system is largely determined by the type and depth of soil and the depth to the water table. Other factors include the size of the property, how steep the site is, location of the system relative to streams, wells, cuts and fills, and whether sewer service is available. In most cases there must also be enough area available for a full system replacement in case the system fails. These criteria are prescribed in Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) Chapter 304, Division 071 and 073. A copy of the rules can be obtained from the DEQ On-site website

### Permit Process

**Step 1:** To prevent a delay, fully complete the application, including the owner's or legally authorized representative's signature, and submit it along with the required fees. If the drainfield is to be altered you must also provide at least 1 test pit (more are necessary for large systems) in the proposed drainfield area. The specific requirements for test pits are provided with the Alteration Permit application packet. At a minimum, the following documents must be attached:

- a) A copy of the *Site Evaluation Report* if required.
- b) A Land Use Compatibility Statement signed by Yamhill County Department of Planning and Development. Their address is 525 NE 4th Street, McMinnville, Oregon 97128.
- c) A vicinity/locator map.
- d) A detailed Site Development Plan and directions to the property.
- e) Detailed plans and specifications for the proposed alteration of the system. For Construction-Installation permitted systems, the plans must be drawn by the property owner or a DEQ-licensed installer.

**Step 2:** After a completed application is received, a Yamhill County On-Site Specialist will visit your property to evaluate your proposal. If drainfield work is proposed more than one visit may be necessary. Yamhill County's goal is to respond to completed Alteration Permit applications within 20 days.

Upon approval, an Alteration Construction-Installation Permit will be issued to alter the septic system. Some permits may be issued with the requirement that detailed plans and specifications be submitted and approved prior to beginning the alteration. Plans must be drawn by the property owner or a DEQ-licensed installer. Once the plans have been approved, you may proceed with the alteration to the septic system as prescribed in the permit. Any changes must receive Yamhill County approval.

***Note:** A septic system must be installed and constructed by the owner or a DEQ-licensed installer using DEQ-approved materials and equipment that meet minimum standards. All equipment must be installed and operated according to the manufacturer's specifications. Contact the Yamhill County Dept. of Planning & Development office if you have questions about installers or approved materials and equipment.*

**Step 3:** A "pre-cover" inspection (before it is covered with soil) of the alteration is required unless waived by Yamhill County. Some complex systems, such as sandfilter systems, require inspections at various stages of construction and these inspection requirements are specified in the permit.

To initiate the pre-cover inspection the installer must complete the *As-Built* (included in the permit packet) and submit it to Yamhill County. This form must be signed by the installer certifying that it was installed according to DEQ specifications. Within seven (7) days of receipt of this completed form, Yamhill County will either waive or conduct the inspection.

**Step 4:** After completion of a satisfactory inspection you may cover the installation. You may then use the septic system.

#### **For more information**

Contact the Yamhill County Dept. of Planning & Development office at (503) 434-7516, or visit the DEQ Onsite website