



TORRINGTON AREA HEALTH DISTRICT

350 Main Street ♦ Suite A ♦ Torrington, Connecticut 06790

Phone (860) 489-0436 ♦ Fax (860) 496-8243 ♦ E-mail info@tahd.org ♦ Web Address www.tahd.org

"Promoting Health & Preventing Disease Since 1967"

Borough of Bantam

September 28, 2010

Bethlehem

To: Engineers and Installers

Canaan

From: Gilbert Roberts, Director of Environmental Health

Cornwall

Re: Change in Policy
Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems

Goshen

Effective August 1, 2010 Torrington Area Health District (TAHD) began phasing in some policy changes with respect to our procedural requirements for installation of new or repaired **engineered** subsurface sewage disposal systems within the TAHD. The following changes take full effect with all new submissions as of August 1, 2010.

Harwinton

Kent

- All septic system installations will now have to be inspected by the design engineer. An "as-built" plan must be prepared and submitted to the TAHD within 30 days of the inspection by the engineer/surveyor that includes the following:

Borough of Litchfield

Litchfield

1. Tank size and location; length, size, and type of leaching system, curtain drain cleanouts if provided.
2. All invert elevations including house sewer, tank in/out, distribution box(s) in/out, ends of system and curtain drain cleanout depths if so provided.
3. Triangulated measurements from permanent markers such as the house corners to the tank covers, distribution boxes, and system ends.
4. A statement that the system was installed in accord with the design plan. Any deviation from the plan as approved by TAHD should also be noted.

Morris

- For leaching systems constructed with the bottoms in fill, a minimum of two percolation tests must be conducted in the fill material before the leaching system is installed. This is in keeping with the recommendations contained in the Department of Public Health Design Manual.

Plymouth

Salisbury

Thomaston

Torrington

- A high percentage of septic tank and pump chamber installations made within the TAHD are in areas that are subject to seasonal high ground water levels that place the septic tank and more importantly the pump chamber partially below ground water level. Generally speaking the weight of a

Warren

Watertown

Winsted

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concrete tank and final cover is sufficient to overcome the buoyancy forces without the need for secondary ballast, however, this is not always the case. Where a portion of the septic tank or pump chamber will be below ground water, the design plan notes should include a statement to the effect that “No ballast is required for the septic tank or pump chamber providing a minimum of _____ ft of cover is maintained.” If ballast is required such as would be necessary for a plastic tank a cross sectional drawing depicting the method of ballast support should be included on the plan.

- Effective as of the date of this correspondence all new plans submitted to the TAHD will include the provision that an in-place sieve test of the “select fill” material on site be conducted as part of the fill approval process. A composite sample collected by the engineer or testing lab must be provided to the TAHD prior to issuance of the Permit to Discharge. This should be done prior to system installation. Our office has had many discussions relative to the need for this requirement. Each year we investigate two or three premature septic system failures in the 3-7 year age bracket where the fill material does not meet the “select fill” requirements of the health code although the providers test sheet indicates that it was acceptable. While this number of failures represents a very small percentage of system installations within the health district, it causes a great deal of aggravation for all parties concerned. In addition, the un-anticipated cost to the homeowner of replacing a relatively new system is a financial hardship. By requiring a sieve test of all in-place fill, we hope to eliminate this variable. The DPH has been requiring in-place testing of select fill on all systems over 2000gal/day for some time now.

TAHD will continue to make scarification and final inspections as has been the practice in the past. We also will be conducting inspections of the final grading and erosion control after the system has been backfilled. By Code, the installer is responsible for covering the system with a minimum of 6 inches of fill or as specified by the leaching product manufacturer. The installer is also responsible for protecting the system from erosion after final cover is complete. The design engineer should outline final cover depth and erosion control measures in the plan of design.

If you should have any questions in regard to these changes please give me a call.