



PROCEDURES TO FOLLOW WHEN AN EVALUATION OF AN INDIVIDUAL  
WATER SUPPLY AND/OR SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM IS REQUESTED

To: Applicants requesting water and sewage evaluations

From: \_\_\_\_\_, Sanitarian  
Environmental Health Section

Re: Procedures in conducting evaluations of water and sewage disposal systems

The Environmental Health Section of the \_\_\_\_\_ Health Department offers a service by evaluating the design, construction, and bacteriological quality of individual water supplies and investigating sewage disposal systems to determine compliance with applicable laws and sanitary standards. Evaluations are to be requested by an owner, buyer, or agent in the purchase or sale of the residence or facility. The appropriate sections of the application form supplied by the health department must be completed in entirety. These evaluations are offered as a service and are not required by law.

Depending upon the availability of the Sanitarian and the time involved in performing the necessary sampling and testing, the final evaluation report may require as much as 30 days for completion.

Fees for these services vary by county. For specific information about the fees charged for sewage disposal system evaluations, water supply evaluations, and joint - sewage system and water supply – evaluations, contact the Environmental Health Section.

Bacteriological analysis of water samples is performed by the West Virginia Bureau for Public Health, Office of Laboratory Services. The Laboratory will bill the property owner a separate charge of \$20.00 for performing each analysis.

It is the policy of this office to make a copy of the evaluation available to the owner, the purchaser, and the lender. Realtors or agents of these principals may be provided a copy of the evaluation if such a request is made. Sanitarians of this office will only conduct the necessary evaluations with the consent and cooperation of the owner or occupant of the residence or facility.

An evaluation of the water supply system requires an inspection of the physical construction and location of the water supply, as well as bacteriological analysis of the water. **Water supplies may only be sampled if they meet the minimum construction standards** established by the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health. The water analysis tests for a group of micro-organisms called coliforms whose presence is an indicator of potentially unsafe drinking water. Samples may only be collected during the first part of the week in order to allow sufficient time for lab analysis.

Should a water sample contain coliform organisms, disinfecting the water supply and retesting is recommended. In some instances, the water supply may be deemed unacceptable for use, or require the installation of disinfection equipment for long-term safety of the supply. Information on proper water supply protection, including the installation of disinfecting equipment, is available from the Environmental Health Section. This process may require a few weeks to complete.

Before evaluation of a sewage system can occur, the residence or facility must have been occupied for the past 30 days. An evaluation of the sewage system may require specific requests for information, the opening of the top of the septic tank, the introduction of tracing dye into the system and several on-site visits by the Sanitarian to confirm the operation of the system. Adequate quantities of water must be provided at the residence or facility to properly assess the ability of the system to handle reasonable design flows. After the dye testing of the sewage system, pumping and cleaning of the septic tank by a licensed septic tank pumper may be necessary. The owner or an authorized representative is expected to be on the premises during the initial dye testing procedure. **The cleaning of the tank is not to be performed immediately prior to the evaluation.**

If the sewage system utilizes a home aeration unit, the unit is to be serviced as needed within the conditions and warranties of an acceptable maintenance contract or by a qualified technician and judged to be in acceptable working order. All home aeration units with a surface discharge are required to have a current DEP Registration. The status of the Registration will be verified with the DEP prior to the evaluation of the system, and evaluations will not be conducted without a current Registration.

The evaluation report will present the findings of what was discovered through reasonable efforts by the Sanitarian to determine the acceptable design and operation of the water and/or sewage system(s) on the day or days on which the evaluation was conducted. A favorable evaluation cannot be used as an assurance that the system or systems can be expected to function satisfactorily in the future. Various factors, such as the normal deterioration of the system, increased water use, weather conditions and physical damage can affect the function of such systems.

If major modifications to the water or sewer systems are necessary, such work may require the employment of a certified well driller or sewage system installer. In many instances a permit may be required prior to any alteration or modification. Contact the Environmental Health Section for a listing of certified well drillers or septic installers located in the area.