

## Section 21 – Systems Maintenance and Abandonment

### 1. Responsibility

- a. The owner shall be responsible for proper maintenance of an OWTS and for abatement of any nuisance arising from its malfunction, unless the responsibility has been contractually assigned to a tenant or a third party or a public, quasi-public or political subdivision, and that contract is on file with the Department.
- b. The owner of a system utilizing higher level treatment shall ensure that the OWTS is operating, maintained, and performing according to the required standards for the designated treatment level. The owner must obtain an Operating Permit pursuant to Section 15.
- c. Any person denying responsibility for the proper operation and maintenance of an OWTS shall bear the burden of proof for such denial upon establishment of ownership or possessory rights for the property served by the system.

### 2. Maintenance and Cleaning

- a. Unless required as a condition of approval, or set forth in an Operating Permit, the following inspection and maintenance schedule is recommended for all OWTS to ensure good working order:

**Table 22-1 Maintenance Recommendations**

Type of System	Inspection or Maintenance	Cleaned or Pumped
Septic tanks	Annually	Every 2-4 years
Vaults, privy vaults, holding tanks	Annually	Between 75-85% capacity
Aeration, mechanical, or higher level treatment units	Per operating permit conditions	
New technology devices	Per permit conditions or maintenance agreement	

### 3. Disposal of Waste Materials

- a. Disposal of waste materials (excluding liquid wastes and sludge) removed from a system in the process of maintenance or repair may be accomplished at the site in a manner that complies with State and local regulations, provided it does not create a hazard to public health, a nuisance or risk of pollution of surface or ground water. Liquid wastes and sludge shall be removed by a Licensed System Cleaner for proper disposal.

### 4. Termination of Use of an OWTS

- a. A septic tank, vault, or holding tank shall be abandoned in the following manner:

- i. The tank may be completely removed and the parts disposed of safely;
- ii. If the tank will remain in place:
  - 1. Electrical lines, if present shall be removed;
  - 2. The inlet and outlet lines shall be capped or removed;
  - 3. The tank shall be pumped to remove as much waste as possible;
  - 4. The bottom of the tank shall be broken so that the tank neither floats nor fills with water;
  - 5. The top shall be collapsed and the sides may be broken into the void;  
and
  - 6. The remaining void shall be filled with gravel, sand, or compacted soil;  
re-graded to match the surrounding topography and re-vegetated.
- b. An absorption bed or trench, mound, or ET system may be abandoned in place by disconnecting and capping the inlet line.
- c. A seepage pit, cesspool, or other system that contains a large internal void shall be abandoned by pumping out the liquid contents, capping, or removing the inlet line, then either collapsing the void or filing with soil or other inert materials to prevent subsidence or collapse.
- d. A non-vault privy shall be abandoned by pumping any liquid material from the privy pit, treatment with quicklime or other disinfectant, then back-filing the pit with soil or inert materials. A privy structure may remain in place provided that the stool is removed and a solid floor placed in the structure.
- e. The Department may require abandonment of a tank or other system component that constitutes a hazard to public health.