



**Ohio Department of Health
Bureau of Environmental Health
Household Sewage
Treatment Systems**

"To protect and improve the health of all Ohioans"

**Responsibilities of a Household
Sewage Treatment System
Authorized Under a General
NPDES Permit**

July 2012

The Ohio EPA issued the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit (NPDES) No. OHK000002 and OHL000001 to provide a process for replacement household sewage systems that discharge treated sewage effluent (non-soil based systems) to gain compliance with the provisions of the Federal Clean Water Pollution Control Act. The complete terms and limitations of these permits can be found on the [Final General Permit page](#) of Ohio EPA's website.

The General Permits define the limitations of coverage for eligible systems and identify conditions where discharging systems cannot be installed. General NPDES Permit OHK000002 allows a local board of health that has jurisdiction where a new or replacement household sewage treatment system is located to determine eligibility of coverage under the permit. Under the conditions and criteria of General NPDES Permit OHL000001, Ohio EPA is responsible for making this determination in local health districts that have not signed an agreement with Ohio EPA. Both General Permits require new and replacement discharging systems to be permitted and installed under a local health district permit.

New or replacement discharging systems must meet certain effluent water quality standards defined in the General Permits. Owners of these systems must obtain on-going service and maintenance for the life of the system, and conduct annual water quality sampling to demonstrate compliance with the permit standards. The Ohio Department of Health, with the recommendation of the Sewage Treatment Systems Technical Advisory Committee, reviews and approves sewage treatment systems and components that treat household wastewater to meet the requirements of the General Permits.

Steps to Install a Replacement Discharging Sewage Treatment System

1. **Complete a Site Evaluation** - A property owner with a discharging system that needs to be replaced should begin by contacting the local health district. The local health district staff will then work with the property owner, and possibly a soil evaluator, to conduct a site evaluation to determine if a soil based system can be installed on the lot.
2. **Determine eligibility for coverage under the General Permit** - If the site evaluation shows that an on-lot or soil based system cannot be installed, the local health district or Ohio EPA will determine whether the property is eligible for coverage under the General Permit for a discharging system.
3. **Submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) to Ohio EPA** - If the local health district has an agreement with Ohio EPA, it will provide you with a letter and a completed NOI. You will need to sign the NOI and mail it along with the designated fee and letter from the local health department to Ohio EPA. If your local health district has not signed an MOU, you must complete and submit the NOI, fee, and the site and soil evaluation information demonstrating that a soil-based system is not feasible to Ohio EPA. This information will be reviewed by Ohio EPA to determine if the property meets the requirements for a replacement discharging system under General NPDES Permit OHL000001. The NOI [application](#) and [instructions](#) are available on Ohio EPA's website.
4. **Obtain a Notice of Coverage** – If your local health district has signed an MOU, the Ohio EPA will send a notice of coverage without further review. For all other health districts, the Ohio EPA will review your submittal and send a notice of coverage upon determination that the site is eligible. The notice of coverage is valid for five years, and is an important document that should be maintained with all other system information.

5. **Apply for an Installation Permit** - A copy of the notice of coverage must be provided to the local health district to obtain an installation permit. System owners and designers must select an approved discharging system for installation and work with a locally registered sewage treatment systems contractor. A [list of household sewage treatment systems approved for discharge](#) is available on the ODH website.

Responsibilities and Requirements for System Owners and Local Health Districts

The General Permits define the responsibilities of ownership and maintenance of a NPDES system.

1. **Effluent Quality Sampling** - Both General Permits require annual testing of the effluent quality. System owners are responsible for ensuring that a sample is collected and reported to the local health district. Samples must be taken in compliance with and meet the effluent monitoring requirements as listed in the General Permits.

Samples must be collected and tested annually for:

- Total Suspended Solids (TSS)
- Ammonia (summer or winter limits--depending on the time of year sample is taken)
- Five Day Carbonaceous Biochemical Oxygen Demand (CBOD)
- Dissolved Oxygen (DO)
- Fecal coliform or E. coli
- Chlorine

Annual effluent sample test results must be reported to the local health district which is required to review the results and ensure the system is meeting discharge limits. Some local health districts may collect these samples as part of the operation permit issued to the system owner. The service provider for a system may offer sample collection as a separate service or as part of the service contract and report the data to the local health district. System owners should contact the local health district to determine the local sampling and reporting process. **Failure to report annual testing is a violation of the General Permit and Ohio Revised Code 6111 and could result in penalties and loss of coverage under the permit.**

2. **Service Contract for the Discharging System** - The owner of a discharging household sewage treatment system that receives coverage under either General Permit is required to maintain a service contract for the life of the system. ODH approval for these systems and the General Permits' conditions require that a service contract be maintained to ensure that the system operates properly and does not discharge untreated sewage effluent. Local health districts are responsible to ensure that system owners maintain a service contract for their system. Local health districts may fulfill this obligation through issuance of an operation permit, and may require a fee. Some local health districts will accept the service provider report in lieu of an inspection conducted by the local health district. Operation and maintenance data for each approved discharging system are listed by manufacturer on the [Approved Pretreatment Components](#) page on the ODH website.

Where can I get more information?

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