



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Health

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To: Operations Directors
District Directors
District Environmental Health Managers
Office of Environmental Health Services

From: Donald R. Stern, M.D., M.P.H.
Acting State Health Commissioner

*AS Stern
for DES*

SUBJECT: Defining onsite sewage permit construction backlogs
Onsite - Applications - Backlog

Background: Legislation passed by the General Assembly in 1994 (Senate Bill 415) requires the Commissioner to contract with authorized onsite soil evaluators to conduct field evaluations of application sites when a district experiences a septic system backlog of 15 working days from the application filing date. The legislation also authorizes the Board of Health to define a backlog in its regulations.

This policy establishes an interim definition of a backlog until the regulations are adopted. This definition is to be used for determining both the extent of a backlog and if contracting with authorized onsite soil evaluators is required. The procedure for contracting with authorized onsite soil evaluators will be covered in a future policy.

Attachment

DEFINITIONS

The following words and terms, when used in this policy, shall have the following meaning:

Active Application: An active application is a complete application that has not been processed by the local or district health department (i.e., a permit or a letter either approving or denying has not been issued) or has otherwise been placed in the inactive status (as defined below).

Complete Application: A complete application is an application that includes all the necessary information needed to process a permit application to construct an onsite sewage disposal system. As a minimum, the application form shall be completely filled in and signed by the property owner or his agent and include a site plan showing the dimensions of the property. The site plan shall show the proposed (or existing) location of all structures, driveways, underground utilities, adjacent sewage disposal systems, bodies of water, drainage ways, wells and springs within a 200 foot radius of the center of the proposed or existing building or drainfield.

Inactive Application: An inactive application is a complete application that the health department cannot process because it is waiting for the applicant to provide additional information or to perform some act that is necessary before an application can be processed. Examples of items that may make an application inactive include (but are not limited to) the need for an acceptable or revised site plan, written permission from the property owner to enter the property, locating of the property lines by the owner, clearing of the property by the owner, survey of the drainfield site location, etc.

Incomplete Application: An incomplete application is an application that does not include the necessary information to process an application for an onsite sewage disposal system permit.

Turnaround Time: The number of work days from the date a complete application is received until the permit is issued.

Backlog: A backlog is anytime the turnaround time for greater than 10 percent of all active applications for onsite sewage construction permits exceeds 15 working days.

For example, if there are 56 active applications on file with a local health department and six or more of the applications are greater than 15 working days old (i.e., they were received by the

local health department more than 15 working days ago) a backlog exists. If fewer than six applications are more than 15 days old, a backlog does not exist. The following rules apply to calculating backlogs:

1. Only applications for construction permits are included in the calculations.
2. Only **complete** applications are included in the calculations.
3. Only **active** applications are included in the calculations.
4. Days when the local health department cannot conduct soil evaluations due to **severe** weather conditions, shall not be included in the 15 day count. Severe weather conditions include: Ice and snow storms, flooding, hurricanes, tornados, etc.

Policy

When the local or district health department, following the above definitions, determines a backlog exists, authorized onsite soil evaluators shall be contracted to conduct the field evaluations on the backlogged applications (i.e., those greater than 15 days old).