

# Van Wert County Household Sewage Treatment System Contractor Program Update

Van Wert County Health Department

May 20, 2008

## Annual Installer Registration

Although annual registration application materials were mailed to all registered household sewage treatment system (HSTS) installers in November of 2007, very few installers have renewed their registration for 2008. Installers are required to be registered prior to performing any installation work during the registration year. Anyone who is not currently registered with our department and who intends to perform system installations in the near future should apply for registration promptly, so that the registration will be current when the installation season begins.

*Note: only installers who are currently registered appear on the installer contact list that is distributed to potential customers.*

This update is being mailed to all household sewage treatment system contractors who were registered in Van Wert County in 2007. All future 2008 mailings will only be sent to currently registered installers. Contractors who are not currently registered but who are on the e-mail distribution list will continue to receive updates via e-mail.

## E-mail Distribution List

An e-mail list has been created to allow for quicker and more efficient sharing of Sewage Treatment System program updates and information on upcoming training opportunities. Contractors and other interested parties who would like to receive

program updates via e-mail should send their e-mail address to [jmenchhofer@vanwertcountyhealth.org](mailto:jmenchhofer@vanwertcountyhealth.org).

## As-Built Records

As required by the Van Wert County Household Sewage Treatment System Regulations, an as-built record must be completed by the registered installer for each completed HSTS installation or alteration. An approval letter will not be issued until the completed as-built record has been received by the health department. Installers who have completed installations but have not yet submitted as-built records will receive a letter listing the as-built records that still must be submitted.

## Installation Conditions

As the HSTS installation season nears, installers are once again reminded that onsite soil absorption-based systems installed in clay soils must be installed when the soil is relatively dry, to avoid unnecessary soil smearing and compaction. In order for installation to proceed, the soil must be sufficiently dry at the depth to which the absorption system will be excavated. **Contact the health department for a moisture assessment before beginning installation.**



When soil will form a long, thin ribbon like the one pictured above, it is too wet to install a soil absorption system

## Pre-Installation “Homework”

As a result of the relatively new prohibition of off-lot discharging systems in most applications, most HSTS must now use soil absorption for the final treatment and dispersal of the wastewater generated in the home. The requirement that these systems be used on our somewhat challenging soils has translated into a much more complicated approval process for homeowners, installers and our department.

Because it is important to “do everything right” with regard to site evaluation, system design and system installation, it is now beneficial to begin the approval and permitting process several months before the system will be installed. The following is a refresher on the steps that must be taken prior to installation of a household sewage treatment system.

### Site and Soil Evaluation

Before our department can make a determination as to the appropriate type and size of the soil absorption system, or even determine that a property is suitable for a soil absorption system, a site and soil evaluation must be completed by a certified soil scientist. This includes a thorough examination of the soil profile in at least one backhoe pit.

### Site Review Application

A site review application must be submitted, along with all required information on the system installation. Probably the most time-consuming piece

of information is a detailed layout plan showing the position of the system on the property, as well as system dimensions, component elevations and other pertinent details required on the site review application. The health department encourages installers to compile this information for homeowners as a lower-cost alternative to hiring an engineer to provide the same drawing and information. Installers are welcome to submit preliminary drawings to the health department for review so that any necessary information may be added before the site review application is submitted.

### Site Review

Once the application is received, the health department must review all of the information submitted to verify that it meets rule requirements and that it fits the site in question. This may involve a visit to the site by the health department. This may not always be necessary, due to the fact that a health department staff member is normally at the site during the site and soil evaluation, and may already be familiar with the site.

### Installation Permit

When the site review has been successfully completed, the applicant will be notified in writing that an installation permit may be applied for at any time. Because all necessary information has already been reviewed, the permit can be issued in a very short period of time when necessary. *The installation permit must be issued before installation may begin.*

## The Time is NOW

Installers who plan to install systems this year for Van Wert County property owners are strongly encouraged to be sure that the steps outlined in the preceding paragraphs are being completed now, so that permits can be issued soon. This way, installation can begin as soon as the weather and soil moisture conditions allow. **Homeowners and installers who wait until the weather is dry to begin the process may find themselves in danger of missing their “window of opportunity” for**

**installing the system before the next significant rainfall creates another delay.**

### More Information...

For more up-to-date information on state and local HSTS Rules, visit the health department HSTS web page at:

[www.vanwertcountyhealth.org/household\\_sewage\\_treatment.htm](http://www.vanwertcountyhealth.org/household_sewage_treatment.htm)

or contact:

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