ORDINANCE INFORMATION

- New septic system installation, or updates to existing systems, must be completed by a licensed installer or the property owner, in accordance with all current rules and regulations.
- Existing systems installed and maintained in accordance with the law are not required to meet current rules and regulations unless, or until SEPHC determines that the system is dangerous, unsafe, unsanitary, a nuisance, or risk to life, health or property.
- A cesspool is illegal and must be removed when work is done on the sewer system, a complaint has been filed, or before the property can be sold.
- The SEPHC will conduct evaluations of existing septic systems in order to facilitate a property transfer.

LINKS TO ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Fargo Cass Public Health:
cityoffargo.com/Residential/CityServices/Healthservices/EnvironmentalHealth/SepticSystems/

NDSU Extension Service: **ag.ndsu.edu/extension**

University of Minnesota: **septic.umn.edu**

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):
epa.gov/septic

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA):
pca.state.mn.us/water/subsurface-sewage-treatment-systems

Cass County Planning: **casscountynd.gov/Pages/ContactUs.aspx?Department=planning**

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SEPHC CONTACT INFORMATION

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NOTE:

The approval of a septic system by SEPHC, whether newly installed or existing, does not constitute a guarantee that the septic system will provide trouble-free service. Proper installation, maintenance, and use, however will decrease the possibility of a premature septic system failure.

ON-SITE SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEMS
(SEPTIC SYSTEMS)

Information Guide

CASS • RANSOM
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PLANNING & INSTALLING A NEW SEPTIC SYSTEM

1. Contact a **licensed septic installer** to design and install the septic system. A list of licensed installers is available from the Environmental division of the SE ND Public Health Collaborative (SEPHC). The installer must coordinate the installation with SEPHC.
2. Determine where the drainfield will be located on the property. **IMPORTANT**: **All construction equipment, soil stockpiles, etc. must be kept off of the future drainfield location in order to avoid soil damage/compaction.**

3. Obtain **at least one soil test** from the location of the future drainfield. The soil test must be conducted by a representative approved by SEPHC.
4. Submit the site-specific soil data to SEPHC along with information regarding the installation of a **garbage disposal** and the **number of bedrooms**. The number of bedrooms includes all rooms that could be used as a sleeping room.
5. The SEPHC must evaluate the septic system **during the installation** to insure that the system is installed in accordance with the design.
6. The **permitting fee** will be collected by SEPHC during the installation inspection and a record of the permitted septic system will be kept at the SEPHC office.
7. Once the septic system is installed, ensure that **vegetative cover** is established and that landscaping directs **drainage** away from the system. Avoid driving on the drainfield.
8. A septic system serving **25 or more occupants** will require review and approval by the North Dakota State Department of Health—701-328-2372.

EVALUATING AN EXISTING SEPTIC SYSTEM

1. Contact SEPHC and request an **evaluation form**.
2. Complete the evaluation form and return it to SEPHC along with the **evaluation fee.** Once the completed evaluation form, and payment has been received, SEPHC will contact the property owner to schedule an evaluation. SEPHC requires a minimum of **two business days** to complete the evaluation.
3. An **evaluation letter** will be prepared once the evaluation is complete.
4. Evaluations will not be completed when the property is covered with **snow or if heavy frost is present**.

5. If a system is **failing** or a **cesspool** is identified during an evaluation, SEPHC will require that the system be replaced with a septic system designed and installed under all current rules and regulations.

FEES

- New system installation / $150
- Installation of a holding tank only / $75
- Evaluation of an existing septic system / $150

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The life expectancy of a septic system is maximized by proper design, installation and maintenance
- The 3 parts of a septic system are:
  1. **Sewage collection system**; consists of the household plumbing
  2. **Septic tank**; used for solids retention and biodegradation
  3. **Drainfield**; treats and disposes of the liquid effluent
- Compacted soil across the drain field causes **reduced oxygen movement** through the soil and adversely affects the treatment of sewage effluent by the septic system
- An **oversized storage tank** will increase system longevity
- Consistently pumping the storage tank as needed, or at least every **3 years**, and controlling solids entering the system will increase system longevity
- **Conserving water,** reducing the volume of water entering the septic system will increase system longevity
- Directing rainwater, from roof gutters and sump pumps, away from the septic system will reduce the chance of system overload/failure
- Vegetation above and around the drain field must be established to insure proper drainage away from the drain field NOTE: avoid any vegetation with deep root systems that may penetrate the drainfield
- Washing clothes throughout the week can help avoid overloading the septic system
- Fats, oils and greases (**FOG**) are difficult for the bacteria in the septic system to break down
- Use **liquid detergents** if possible or highly biodegradable powdered detergents
- Toilet paper and human waste are the only things that should be flushed down a toilet