



# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

## GUADALUPE COUNTY

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### PERMIT PROCESS: ON-SITE SEWAGE FACILITY (OSSF)

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**A person may not begin to construct, alter, repair, extend, or operate an on-site sewage disposal facility (OSSF) unless a permit is issued by the Guadalupe County Environmental Health Department (County).**

Before building, altering, extending, repairing or operating an OSSF, a person must submit an application with supporting planning materials and receive an authorization to construct (ATC) an OSSF issued by the County. The permitting process is comprised of several steps that will need to be followed in order for the OSSF to be considered in compliance with local and state regulations.

#### STEP 1: EVALUATE SITE AND SOIL

A registered sanitarian (RS), site evaluator or professional engineer (PE) must conduct a site and soil evaluation. The evaluation includes: 1) conducting an assessment of the entire lot; 2) a soil analysis in the proposed disposal area; and 3) identification other necessary criteria to determine suitability for an OSSF system.

#### STEP 2: CHOOSE A SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEM

The type of OSSF system is based on the site and soil conditions determined during the evaluation. Choosing the appropriate technology is critical to the system's success.

An OSSF has two primary components: 1) a treatment component, for initial treatment of the wastewater; and 2) a land application component, that distributes the wastewater. To determine possible land application options, compare the key conditions of the site and soil to the requirements for the various systems.

The type of land application system chosen determines the kind of treatment system that can be used. Examples of treatment options include septic tanks, aerobic treatment units, sand filters, trickling filters and constructed wetlands. The treatment system chosen depends on the water quality requirements of the land application system, which is chosen to accommodate the site and soil conditions. Final selection of the system components should be completed in cooperation with the professional designer (PE, RS and/or site evaluator).

#### STEP 3: SUBMIT AN OSSF PERMIT APPLICATION AND PLANNING MATERIALS

An OSSF application and planning materials must be prepared and submitted in the property owner's name and on a form provided by the County.

- A completed application, on the current form provided by the permitting authority; this form is located on the Guadalupe County Environmental Health website at: <https://www.guadalupe.tx.gov/eh/ossf.php>
- All planning materials, according to Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Title 30 Chapter 285.5 (relating to Submittal Requirements for Planning Materials);
- The results of a site evaluation, conducted according to TAC Title 30 Chapter 285.30 (relating to Site Evaluation); and
- The appropriate fee.

#### STEP 4: REVIEW OF APPLICATION AND MATERIALS

The County Designated Representative (DR) reviews the application, site and soil evaluation, the type and size of the system selected, and other supporting documents required for an Authorization to Construct (ATC) to be issued. The

owner or owner's agent must obtain an ATC from the County before construction may begin on an OSSF. The County DR may visit the site to verify the application accuracy and completeness.

In some cases, a new review will be needed, such as when site conditions are different from those submitted in the planning materials. The level of certification (Installer I or II) required for construction depends on the type of system.

**STEP 5: AUTHORIZATION TO CONSTRUCT (ATC)** - *Written permission from the County to construct an OSSF showing the date the permission was granted. **The authorization to construct is the first part of the permit.***

An ATC must be issued by the County before construction can begin. An ATC may be withheld for, included, but not limited to, the following reasons:

- A Floodplain Development Permit being required and not issued.
- Noncompliance with the Guadalupe County Subdivision Regulations.
- Missing, omitted, or contradictory information in the application as required in TAC Title 30, Chapter 285.5 - 285.30 Rules for onsite sewage facilities.

Action on Applications. The County shall either approve or deny an application within 30 days of receiving an application. If the application and planning materials are approved, the permitting authority shall issue an ATC. If the application and planning materials are denied, the County shall explain the reasons for the denial in writing to the owner, and the owner's agent.

#### **STEP 6: CONSTRUCTION AND INSTALLATION OF THE SYSTEM**

Licensed installers or their apprentices can begin constructing the system only after receiving the ATC. An ATC is valid for one calendar year from the date of its issuance. If the installer does not request a construction inspection by the County within one year of the issuance of the ATC, the ATC expires, and the owner will be required to submit a new application and application fee before an OSSF can be installed. A new application and application fee are not required if the owner decides not to install an OSSF.

The system must be built according to the approved plans and application. Any revisions or changes made to the planning materials will need to be submitted in writing to the Guadalupe County Environmental Health Department. Any revisions or changes will need to be approved before those changes are completed.

#### **STEP 7: SYSTEM INSPECTION**

The inspection should be based on the approved application and plans, current regulations, and accepted engineering practices.

The system must be inspected by the County at the appropriate stages of construction according to the type of system being installed. Inspections must be scheduled in advance and according to local policies. They will be comprehensive, covering all parts of the system.

This office must be notified at least 48 hours before an inspection is needed. If the system does not pass inspection or is not ready to be inspected when the DR arrives, the installer will be assessed a \$100.00 re-inspection fee. The re-inspection fee must be paid in full before another inspection is scheduled. These requirements also apply to OSSFs in need of alteration or repair.

**STEP 8: LICENSE TO OPERATE (LTO)/NOTICE OF APPROVAL** - *Written permission from the County to operate an on-site sewage facility.*

A License to Operate (LTO)/Notice of Approval (NOA) will be issued by the County after the completed system has passed all inspections.

- Within seven calendar days after the OSSF has passed the construction inspection, the permitting authority shall issue, to the owner or owner's agent, a written notice of approval for the OSSF.
- The notice of approval is the final part of the permit.

**\*A Notice of Approval is required before an On-Site Sewage facility can begin to service a structure or be put into use.**