



Clean Water, Healthy People

The mission of the Jefferson County Public Health Onsite Sewage Program is to minimize the threat of surface and ground water contamination from failing or improperly designed, installed, or maintained onsite sewage systems. Staff from the Onsite Sewage Program and the Water Quality program work together to identify and eliminate sources of fecal pollution to protect water quality and shellfish resources throughout Jefferson County.



septic System decommissioning

**Jefferson County
Environmental Public Health
Onsite Sewage Program**

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PUBLIC HEALTH
ALWAYS WORKING FOR A SAFER AND
HEALTHIER COMMUNITY



Septic Decommissioning FAQ's



Why should I decommission my old septic system once I'm connected to sewer?

Old systems left in the ground unmaintained can become a safety hazard. If the system is not decommissioned properly, the county has to assume that the system is still being used and therefore the owner must regularly have the system inspected by a certified inspector, which would incur unnecessary costs to homeowners.

How do I know if my property has an old septic system?

Every property that had a home or building with water service and was constructed prior to the availability of a public sewer has a septic system. An older system could be a cesspool, which is 3 to 4 feet in diameter and about 3 to 15 feet deep made with perforated walls using either brick or concrete. Or the system may have a septic tank and drainfield, with tanks that could be concrete or metal from 5 to 7 feet long by 5 to 7 feet wide. The tank may only be buried by a shallow layer of soil.

How do I locate an abandoned septic tank or cesspool?

Typically these systems can be anywhere from 5 to 30 feet away from the foundation of the buildings they served but they are buried and

may not have any markers to show their exact location. If the system was permitted in the 1970s or was assessed after that date by the county, there may be septic system records showing the type, size, and/or placement of the septic system on your property.



How do I view my old septic system information?

You need to access your 5-digit Septic Case Number that begins with the letters "SEP". Visit <http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/204> and see "Permit Files Online" under the "Septic Systems" link, to see full instructions on how to access your permit files. Certified professionals who are authorized to decommission septic systems can also locate this information for you.

How do I decommission a septic system?

There are two main steps to decommissioning your old system:

- Have a certified Septic System **Pumper** pump out any sewage or wastewater that is still remaining in the tank.
- Have a Certified Septic System **Installer** decommission the tank. They will break the tank in place and backfill the entire system with clean fill. The installer/designer will then fill out and submit all paperwork required to inform Jefferson County that the system has been decommissioned.

Who can decommission a septic system?

Only certified and approved personnel can decommission septic tanks. Jefferson County maintains a list of certified professionals (both pumpers and installers) on its website under the link "Septic Systems"

<http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/650>

What is the likely cost for decommissioning my old septic system?

The cost will vary depending on the amount of sewage left in the system, the complexity of the system, and the professionals chosen to do the job. Pumping may cost up to \$350-\$400 per tank. The cost for decommissioning the system and submitting the paperwork to the county can range up to \$1000.

Where can I get more information?

You can get additional facts from our website at <http://www.co.jefferson.wa.us/204> under the "Septic Systems" link. You can also call us at (360) 385-9444 or see us in person at 615 Sheridan Street, Port Townsend. A free consultation with a sanitarian is available Monday through Friday from 9:00 to 10:30 am. You can also email us at the following address: envhealthadmin@co.jefferson.wa.us

