

PROTECT LAKE GEORGE WATER QUALITY BY KNOWING STATE AND LOCAL REGULATIONS FOR ON-SITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS (OWTS)

SEPTIC SYSTEM RULES

The New York State Department of Health and the Department of Education require that on-site wastewater treatment systems (OWTS; commonly referred to as "septic systems") designs be prepared by a "licensed design professional" for all residential developments. (It is strongly encouraged that a licensed professional engineer be used for OWTS design or upgrades.) These design activities come under the definition of the practice of professional engineering or architecture. This rule applies to all new and upgraded OWTS.

The following are the regulations governing development of an OWTS during construction of a new or significantly modified residential home:

- For new residential construction, the design of all new OWTS shall be performed by an appropriately licensed design professional.
- For additions or alterations, an OWTS evaluation shall be performed and submitted by a licensed design professional for home alterations resulting in an increase in the number of bedrooms, for complete home replacements (including those resulting in the same number of bedrooms), and for alterations resulting in significant increases in wastewater generation. The evaluation must document if the existing OWTS complies with applicable state and local (Town/Village) design standards and



Test pits and percolation tests, like those above, are requirements for proper siting of an on-site wastewater treatment system.

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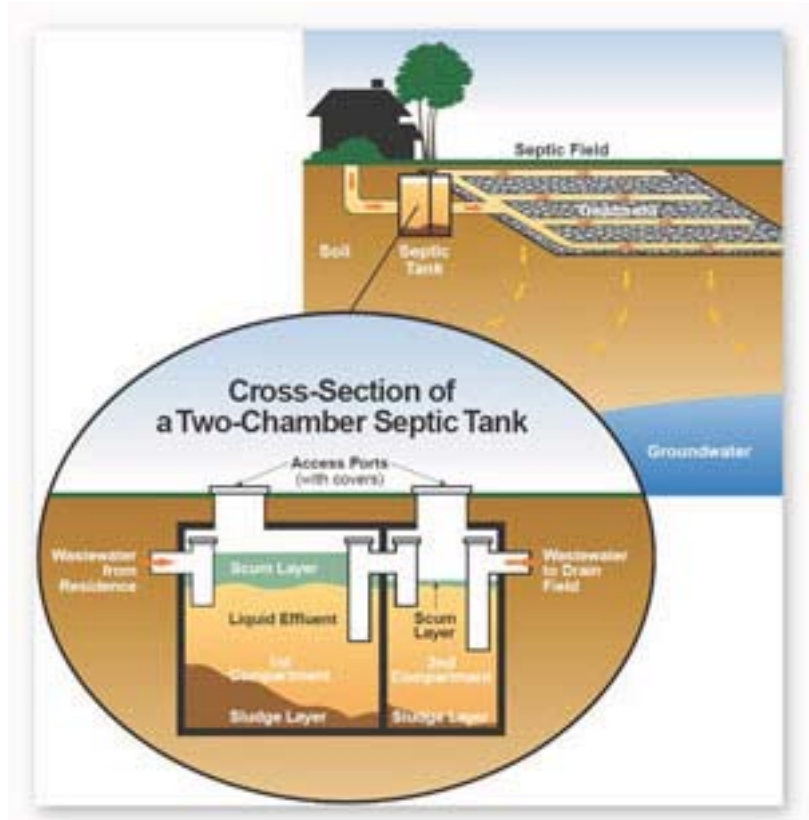
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determine if the current OWTS and its components are in satisfactory conditions, functioning properly and can properly treat the proposed increased wastewater generation. If the existing OWTS does not comply with regulatory design standards or needs significant modification, the licensed design professional shall prepare plans and oversee the installation or the alterations to the OWTS.

- Repairs and replacements of OWTS components “in kind” or “like-for-like” may not require the involvement of a licensed design professional, i.e. septic tank replacement or distribution box replacement.
- A series of setback requirements must be met for the location of the OWTS in relation to buildings, property lines, wells, among other considerations.

The OWTS design for new residential homes is under the jurisdiction of the New York State Department of Health. NYSDOH Regulations are provided in Appendix 75-A and guidance is provided through the NYSDOH Design Handbook (1996), which is readily available online. The Handbook provides an array of useful information.



Conventional OWTS include a septic tank that collects wastewater where solids settle (primary treatment) and a distribution box and leach field for effluent treatment and disposal.

In addition, there may be more stringent local sanitary codes or regional agency regulations (APA) depending on the location of a structure in the Lake George area. For instance, new development or modifications in areas zoned “Moderate Intensity” under the APA Act require an APA permit, which includes approval for the OWTS, in addition to a local building permit. The local zoning or building department should be consulted to determine permitting requirements in all cases.

