

Property Transfer Inspection Information

Beginning in January 2008, all properties served by a household sewage treatment system (HSTS) are required to be inspected prior to the property transfer, in accordance with Stark County Sewage Treatment System Operation and Maintenance Regulations. The inspection is a measure to help prevent the discharge of partially or untreated sewage into the waterways of the County. Improperly treated sewage is not only a nuisance, but poses a risk to human health and is a documented source of environmental pollution. The inspection also provides both the buyer and seller information to help make informed decisions about the real estate transaction.

The property transfer inspection provides documentation of a "snap-shot" in time of the type and condition of the sewage treatment system. Unfortunately, it cannot guarantee the future performance of the system due to variables such as: user load, weather conditions, and the limitations of a visual inspection. Please note that if a property has access to a sanitary sewer (typically a lateral has been provided to the property) the connection must be made and the HSTS properly abandoned. HSTS property transfer inspections may be conducted by a health department inspector or a registered service provider. A current list of service providers can be obtained from our website at www.starkhealth.org. To prepare for the inspection the owner or his/her agent should be aware of the following:

1. Access to the home must be provided. Please provide a contact person who can be present to let the inspector into the home. (Health Department personnel are not permitted to enter a home unless an authorized person is present. Check with the service provider for their individual policies.)
2. Be aware that laundry and sump crock connections must be checked. The Ohio Sewage Regulations require laundry water to go into the sewage treatment system and prohibits clean surface or ground water (i.e. footer drain, downspouts) from entering it. If either one of these conditions exists, they will need to be re-plumbed to comply with sewage codes.
3. At a minimum, all septic tank inspection ports/cleanout, leach well(s), diversion boxes and/or distribution boxes (if equipped) must be exposed by the homeowner or their agent prior to the inspection. If the system has not been pumped recently (within the last three years), please wait until after the inspection to pump the tanks. The water level in the tanks must be at normal operating level to proceed with the inspection.
4. In certain cases, the inspector may deem it necessary to re-check the property on a subsequent day to ensure that dye has not migrated into area waterways.
5. When a home has remained vacant for an extended period of time, the inspection becomes more difficult because there has been no load on the system. If the home has been vacant for 30 days or more, the buyer may opt to sign a waiver, stating that the inspection will be conducted AFTER the transfer. However, the buyer will be responsible for any corrections that are necessary. If the buyer decides to proceed with the inspection, obvious problems may be able to be found. If no problems are found, the health department may require another inspection in the future once the home is occupied.
6. If water sampling is requested, homes that have been vacant should flush all plumbing thoroughly prior to sampling.
7. Things that can delay the completion of the inspection are: if chlorination and re-sampling of the well is necessary, if the loan institution requires lead and nitrate samples, or if HSTS problems are noted. Normally, it will take about one week to complete your HSTS inspection (by the Health Department). However during the busy summer months it may take longer. Please plan accordingly.

Be advised that if the sewage system fails the inspection it may require a repair or replacement. Replacement of a system could take several weeks, but may be done after the transfer of ownership.