

Frequently Asked Questions: Existing System Evaluation Report Form and Inspections



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

**Water Quality Onsite
Program**
165 E. 7th Ave Ste 100
Eugene, OR 97401
Phone: (541) 686-7838
(800) 844-8467
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www.oregon.gov/DEQ

- Question:** Who is allowed to perform existing system evaluations, also called septic system inspections?
Answer: Only certified individuals that have experience performing inspections are allowed to perform existing system evaluations.

Accepted certifications listed in OAR 340-071-0155: licensed and certified septic system installer, certified maintenance provider, registered environmental health specialist, licensed professional engineer, NAWT certified inspector, or other professional certification approved in writing by DEQ.

Note: Licensed pumpers are not allowed to perform existing system evaluations unless they also have one of the certifications listed above.
- Question:** When is the ESER form used?
Answer: The ESER form must be used every time an existing system evaluation, also called septic system inspection, is performed.
- Question:** Who is supposed to use the ESER form?
Answer: Any person performing an existing system evaluation must use the DEQ-approved ESER form. This includes Installers, Maintenance Providers, NAWT Certified Inspectors, Environmental Health Specialists, Professional Engineers, County agents and DEQ agents.
- Question:** I am a Certified NAWT Inspector. Can I use the NAWT inspection form to report results from an inspection?
Answer: No. You must use the DEQ-approved ESER form to report inspection results. The ESER form is specific to systems used in Oregon and technical terms commonly used in Oregon.
- Question:** I am a Maintenance Provider and have O&M contracts for ATT's, sand filters, pressure distribution and re-circulating gravel filter systems. Do I use the ESER form when providing service and maintenance to these systems as part of an annual service maintenance contract?
Answer: No. The ESER form is *not* used for service and maintenance performed as part of an annual service maintenance contract.
- Question:** I meet the qualifications needed to perform Existing System Evaluations. Where do I sign-up as an Oregon Septic Smart Inspector?
Answer: Sign-up as an Inspector through the Oregon Septic Smart Pro website
- Question:** Where can I find a list of Oregon Septic Smart Inspectors?
Answer: Find a list of certified and approved Inspectors on the Oregon Septic Smart Home website.
- Question:** I hired an Inspector to inspect my septic system. Should I be there when the inspection is being performed?

Answer: The DEQ recommends that you be present during the septic system inspection. If you have any questions about the information reported to you on the ESER form you can immediately ask the Inspector for clarification.



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9. **Question:** I do not want to have my septic tank pumped, but the Inspector told me they would not be able to inspect the septic tank if it was not pumped. Why?
Answer: DEQ recommends having your septic tank pumped so the tank can be properly inspected. The Inspector will not be able to see all of the tank components if the tank is full of solids, scum and wastewater. The Inspector has to write down that you declined to have your tank pumped if you decide not to have this service.
10. **Question:** I want to have my septic tank inspected, but I do not want a full septic system inspection. Who is allowed to perform this service and what form do they use to report the findings?
Answer: The requirements for septic tank inspection are the same: only those individuals described in #1 above are allowed to perform this service. The Inspector must use the ESER form to report the findings of the septic tank inspection, and they must also write down why the other sections of the ESER form were not completed.
11. **Question:** I want to have a records review (permit, maintenance records, etc), but I do not want a full septic system inspection. Who is allowed to perform this service and what form do they use to report the findings?
Answer: The requirements for a records review are the same: only those individuals described in #1 above are allowed to perform this service. The system owner can compile and provide the records to an Inspector, but the Inspector must use the ESER form to report the findings of the records review. The Inspector must also write down on the ESER form why the other sections of the ESER form were not completed.
12. **Question:** I got an estimate for a septic system inspection, and it costs more than what I paid for a tank pumping and inspection last time. Why does it cost more?
Answer: The ESER form reflects the new standard for performing septic system inspections. The cost of an inspection will account for the work entailed in completing the ESER form.
13. **Question:** Do I need to submit a copy of a completed ESER form to DEQ?
Answer: No, you do not need to submit a copy of a completed ESER form to DEQ. After an inspection, the Inspector will provide a completed ESER form to the client that ordered the inspection.



Existing System Evaluation Report for Onsite Wastewater Systems



Crook County Community Development On-Site Program
300 NE 3rd St., Rm 12 Prineville, OR 97754
Phone: 541-447-8155 Fax: 541-416-2139

For more information, visit www.oregon.gov/DEQ/MQ/pages/onsite/septicmart. Please answer the following questions as completely as possible. Refer to OAR 340-071-0155.

Septic System Owner Information:

Property Owner(s)(Sellers): _____ Telephone: _____

Site Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____

County: _____ Lot Size: _____ Acres/Square Feet (circle units)

Legal Description: _____

Age of wastewater treatment system _____ (years)

Date the septic tank was last pumped _____ (please attach receipt if available)

The above information is true and to the best of my knowledge.

Date (DD/MM/YYYY)

Signature of Owner

Name of person performing inspection (please print): _____

Certification:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Installer | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Engineer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance Provider | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Health Specialist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> National Association of Wastewater Technicians | <input type="checkbox"/> Wastewater Specialist |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: DEQ approved in writing (please describe) _____ | |

Certification Number: _____

Business name _____ Email _____

Business address _____ Phone _____

Date of Inspection: _____ (YYYY)

I hereby certify, by my signature, that I meet all of the qualifications required to perform onsite wastewater system inspections in the state of Oregon pursuant to OAR 340-071-0155.

Date

Signature of Qualified Septic System Inspector

1. General System Information

The Existing System Evaluation Report form contains 7 pages. Some of the questions on this form may not pertain to the system being inspected, as there are many system designs. If you (the septic system inspector) are unable to answer any of the questions on this form please indicate, in writing, why this information was not available at the time the inspection was completed.

- The existing septic system consists of (check all that apply):
 - Septic Tank
 - Disposal Trenches/ Leach Lines
 - Seepage Bed
 - Other (please describe) _____
 - Cesspool
 - Capping Fill
 - Sand Filter
- There is a permit for the septic system Yes No
- Permit Number _____
- Date septic system installed: _____ (YYYY) No record of installation date
- All plumbing fixtures are connected to the septic system Yes No
If you answered "No," please describe below:

2. Overall Septic System Status

- Discharge of sewage to the ground surface Yes No
- Discharge of sewage to surface waters Yes No
- Sewage backup into plumbing fixtures Yes No

3. Septic tank

In order to fully describe the condition of the tank, the septic tank may need to be pumped. Please indicate below if the septic system tank was pumped during the course of *this* inspection.

- Septic tank was pumped during the course of *this* inspection Yes No
- If the septic tank was **NOT pumped** during the course of *this* inspection, please explain below, e.g. septic system owner declined to have the tank pumped etc:

- The septic tank material is:
 - Concrete
 - Steel
 - Plastic
 - Fiberglass
 - Other (explain) _____
 - Unknown
- Is the septic tank accessible? Yes No
- Septic tank volume (in gallons) _____
- Septic tank risers are at ground level Yes No

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- Tank appears to be watertight and in good condition Yes No
If you answered "No," please describe the condition of the septic tank below. For example, evidence of gas corrosion, cracks, leaks, etc.

- Septic tank lid(s) is intact Yes No
- Septic tank baffles and elbows are intact Yes No
- Effluent filter is present Yes No
- Effluent filter is free of debris Yes No
- Liquid level in tank relative to invert of outlet At Above Below
- Scum layer _____(inches) Sludge layer _____(inches)
- Scum and Sludge layer more than 35% of the *total* tank volume Yes No

4. Dosing tank

Dosing tanks, where present, have a pump that sends effluent to the soil absorption field (leach field). Not all septic system designs have a dosing tank.

- The septic system has a dosing tank Yes No
(If "No," skip the rest of section 4)
- Dosing tank capacity _____(gallons)
- Dosing tank material _____
- Dosing tank appears to be watertight and in good condition Yes No
- Dosing tank lid is intact Yes No
- Electrical components are sealed and watertight Yes No
- Pump/ siphon is functional Yes No
- Type of Pump Demand dose Time dose
- Pump control mechanism is functional (floats, pressure transducer) Yes No
- There is a high water alarm Yes No
- The high water alarm (audible and visual) is working Yes No N/A
- Type of screen _____
- Screen is clean and free of debris Yes No
- Scum/ sludge present in Dosing tank Yes No
- Scum layer _____(inches) Sludge layer _____(inches)

5. Soil absorption system

The soil absorption system is a set of trenches that receives effluent from the septic tank and filters the effluent before it enters the groundwater.

- The septic system has a soil absorption system Yes No

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- Locate all drain lines in soil absorption system Yes No

Total length of drain lines _____ (ft)

- Absorption distribution Equal Serial Pressure Equal via pressure
- Absorption lines construction material:

Gravel and pipe Chamber Tile Polystyrene foam and pipe Other _____

- Absorption distribution unit(s) Intact Damaged N/A
- Absorption distribution unit(s) are free of debris or solids Yes No
- Absorption area appears to be free from roads, vehicular traffic, structures, livestock, deep-rooted plants etc.
 Yes No

If you answered "No," please describe below:

- Absorption area appears to be free from surface water runoff and down spouts Yes No
- Evidence of ponding in absorption area or distribution unit(s) Yes No
- The absorption replacement area assigned in the "as-built" drawing appears to be intact
 Yes No

If you answered "No," please explain below:

6. Sand Filter System

There are different sand filter system designs used in Oregon. Not every sand filter system will contain all of the components mentioned below, e.g. pumps. The owner of a sand filter system **installed on or after January 2, 2014 must maintain an annual service contract with a certified Maintenance Provider. Maintenance records should be available from the system owner, or the contracted Maintenance Provider. Please attach copies of the previous two years of maintenance records to this inspection form.**

- The septic system has a sand filter Yes No
(If "No," skip the rest of section 6)
- Type of sand filter
 - Intermittent
 - Re-circulating
 - Bottomless

- Sand filter container appears to be watertight and in good condition Yes No
- Sand filter appears to be free from roads, vehicular traffic, structures, livestock, deep-rooted plants etc.
 Yes No

If you answered "No," please describe below:

- Sand filter appears to be free from surface water runoff and down spouts Yes No
- Evidence of ponding in/ on sand filter media surface Yes No
- Lateral lines flushed and equal distribution verified Yes No
- Monitoring ports are present Yes No
- Surface access to manifold and valves Yes No
- The sand filter has a pump Yes No
(If "No", skip the rest of section 6)
- Pump vault appears to be watertight and in good condition Yes No N/A
- Pump is functional Yes No
- Pump control mechanism is functional (floats, pressure transducer) Yes No
- High water alarm in pump vault (audible and visual) is working Yes No
- Pump electrical components and are sealed and watertight Yes No

7. Alternative Treatment Technology System

The owner of an ATT system *must* maintain an annual service contract with a certified Maintenance Provider. Maintenance records should be available from the system owner, or the contracted Maintenance Provider. **Please attach copies of the previous two years of maintenance records to this inspection form.**

Note* Some ATT systems may have a WPCF permit. Please contact the local Health Department or the DEQ to obtain a copy of the WPCF permit.

- The septic system is an **Alternative Treatment Technology (ATT)** Yes No
(If "No," skip the rest of section 7)
- Please provide the product name, system id number, and manufacturer name below:

Product name _____
System ID number _____
Manufacturer name _____

- Previous two years of maintenance records are available Yes No
If you answered "No," please explain below:

- Previous two years of maintenance records are attached to this form Yes No
If you answered "No," please explain below:

8. Please attach a copy of the following items to this form. Contact the DEQ, or the local Health Department to locate these items.

- a. Please attach a **copy** of the original septic system permit to this form, if available
- b. Please attach a **copy** of the original as-built drawing to this form, if available
- c. Please attach a **copy** of the Certificate of Satisfactory Completion to this form, if available

9. Provide a Plot Plan

- Please provide a sketch of the complete system on page 7 of this form, if a copy of the original "as-built" drawing is *not* available.

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- Please provide a sketch of the complete system on page 7 of this form if the original “as-built” drawing is *not* accurate or representative of the existing system.
- If the original “as-built” drawing is available for copy, and the original is accurate and representative of the existing system, write “same as as-built” on page 7 of this form, and do not redraw the system.

10. Disclaimer:

This evaluation report describes the on-site system as it exists on the date of inspection and to the extent that components and operation of the system are reasonably observable. DEQ recognizes that this evaluation report does not provide assurance or any warranty that the system will operate properly in the future.

11. I hereby certify, by my signature, that the above information and the plot plan on the reverse side of this form are accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Date

Signature of Qualified Septic System Inspector

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Provide a Plot Plan in the space below: Show the actual or best estimate measurements that locate the existing septic tank, disposal trenches, property lines, easements, existing structures, driveways, and water supply (water lines and wells). **Draw to scale and indicate the direction north.**

