

PRIVATE SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEMS

SEPARATION DISTANCES

If your home is not connected to a municipal sewer system, then you must have a private sewage treatment system (PSTS). Your PSTS doesn't just affect you, it affects everything around you. That's why it is important to have your PSTS located in an appropriate location, protecting your home, family, property, and neighbours from system failures.

Location! Location! Location!

Separation distances are required between the sewage treatment system and features of your site. This will affect the system type your site can accommodate and its location.

Does Your Property Adjoin a Water Body?

According to Article 2.1.2.4 of the Alberta Private Sewage Systems Standard of Practice (SOP), on a property that adjoins a specific surface water such as a lake, river, stream or creek, the effluent disposal component of a private sewage system shall be located not less than 90m (300 ft.) from the shore of the body of water. If a principal building or other development feature is located between the system and the body of water, the 90m (300 ft.) may be reduced to the minimum distance requirements stated here for that type of treatment system.

Separation Distances

Tanks including water-tight septic tanks, holding tanks, effluent tanks, lift station tanks, and settling tanks* shall not be located within:

- 10m (33 ft.) of a water source or water well
- 10m (33 ft.) of a water course
- 1m (3.25 ft.) of a property line
- 1m (3.25 ft.) of a building

*Settling tank: 6m (20 ft.) of a property line when it includes pre-aeration. See article 6.2.2.1. for additional separation considerations.



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Packaged sewage treatment plants shall not be located within:

- 10m (33 ft.) of a water source or water well
- 10m (33 ft.) of a water course
- 6m (20 ft.) of a property line
- 1m (3.25 ft.) of a building

Sub-surface treatment fields shall not be located within:

- 15m (50 ft.) of a water source or water well
- 100m (330 ft.) of a licensed municipal water well
- 15m (50 ft.) of a water course, except as provided in Article 2.1.2.4 of the SOP
- 1.5m (5 ft.) of a property line
- 10m (33 ft.) of a basement, cellar or crawl space
- 1m (3.25 ft.) of a building that does not have a permanent foundation
- 5m (17 ft.) of a building that has a permanent foundation but does not have a basement, cellar, or crawl space
- 5m (17 ft.) of a septic tank or packaged sewage treatment plant

LFH At-grade systems shall not be located within:

- 15m (50 ft.) of a water source or water well
- 100m (330 ft.) of a municipal licensed water well
- 15m (50 ft.) of a water course, except as restricted in Article 2.1.2.4 of the SOP
- 3m (10 ft.) of a property line where ground is level or slope is less than 1%
- 6m (20 ft.) of a property line that is located downslope of the LFH At-grade system where the slope is 1% or more
- 3m (10 ft.) of a septic tank, packaged sewage treatment plant, effluent tank, or other tank in the system
- 10m (33 ft.) of a building

Open discharge sewage systems may be installed provided the point of discharge is not less than:

- 50m (165 ft.) to a water source or water well
- 100m (330 ft.) of a licensed municipal water well
- 45m (150 ft.) to a water course, except as required by Article 2.1.2.4 of the SOP
- 90m (300 ft.) to a property line
- 45m (150 ft.) to a building



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Treatment mounds shall not be located within:

- 15m (50 ft.) of a water source or water well
- 100m (330 ft.) of a licensed municipal water well
- 15m (50 ft.) of a water course, except as provided in Article 2.1.2.4 of the SOP
- 3m (10 ft.) of a property line
- 3m (10 ft.) of a septic tank
- 10m (33 ft.) of a basement, cellar or crawl space
- 10m (33 ft.) of a building that does not have a basement, cellar or crawl space

A **lagoon** serving a single-family dwelling or duplex shall not be located within:

- 100m (330 ft.) of a water source or water well
- 100m (330 ft.) of a municipal licensed water well
- 90m (300 ft.) of a water course
- 30m (100 ft.) of a property line
- 45m (150 ft.) of a building

A **lagoon** serving other than a single-family dwelling or duplex shall not be located within:

- 100m (330 ft.) of a water source or water well
- 100m (330 ft.) of a municipal licensed water well
- 90m (300 ft.) of a water course
- 30m (100 ft.) of a property line
- 90m (300 ft.) of a building
- 90m (300 ft.) of a numbered primary or secondary road

A **privy** shall not be located within:

- 15m (50 ft.) of a water source or water well
- 15m (50 ft.) of a water course, except as required by Article 2.1.2.4 of the SOP
- 5m (17 ft.) of a property line
- 6m (20 ft.) of a store, restaurant, or other place where food is stored, prepared or consumed
- 3.5m (11.5 ft.) of a single-family dwelling

A **privy** equipped with a water-tight holding tank to contain the wastes shall not be located within:

- 10m (33 ft.) of a water source or water well
- 10m (33 ft.) of a water course
- 1m (3 ft.) of a property line as measured from the tank wall
- 1.8m (6 ft.) of a property line as measured from the tank vent termination



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Sub-surface drip dispersal and irrigation systems measured from any part of the drip dispersal tubing shall not be located within:

- 15m (50 ft.) of a water source or water well
- 100m (330 ft.) of a licensed municipal water well
- 15m (50 ft.) of a water course, except as required by Article 2.1.2.4 of the SOP
- 1.5m (5 ft.) of a property line
- 1 m (3.25 ft.) from a building that does not have a permanent foundation
- *5 m (17 ft.) from a building that has a permanent foundation but does not have a basement, cellar or crawl space
- *10 m (33 ft.) from a basement, cellar, or crawl space
- *5 m (17 ft.) from a septic tank or packaged sewage treatment plant

*This distance may be reduced to 1.5m (5 ft.) when the system is used specifically for irrigation and the effluent hydraulic loading rates do not exceed irrigation needs.

Note: a drip dispersal system is subject to seasonal use. If the development requires the use of the system during the period of November 1 to March 31, then the requirements of Article 8.5.1.5 must be applied.

Importance of permits

The Safety Codes Act requires that permits in Alberta be obtained prior to commencing work on any buildings covered by the Alberta Building and Fire Codes, the Canadian Electrical Code, the Gas Code, the National Plumbing Code, or the Alberta Private Sewage Systems Standard of Practice.

Permits are part of a process to access compliance to a minimum standard of construction safety for the benefit of all Albertans. If construction projects are undertaken without required permits, the owner may be subject to penalties and extra costs incurred to bring a project into compliance.

As the property owner, you are responsible to obtain all necessary permits. A contractor can look after this on your behalf; however, you should specify in writing, who will get the required permits. Some jurisdictions may require a letter of authorization before a contractor can apply for permit(s) on your behalf.

Benefits of getting a permit

When you get a permit, certified safety codes officers (inspectors) will:

- give you expert advice,
- review your plans to find any potential problems,
- inspect your project, and
- make sure your project meets the applicable provincial code.



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Making changes at the planning stage can save you money, rather than making costly corrections after construction. Certified safety codes officers will give you an inspection report(s) and follow-up on deficiencies to make sure your project is safe and in compliance.

Where do you get a permit?

Permits are available through municipalities that administer the Safety Codes Act and through agencies that provide inspection services on behalf of municipalities or the province. If you don't know whether your municipality issues permits, contact the Alberta Safety Codes Authority (ASCA) at 1-888-413-0099 or visit safetycodes.ab.ca.

Applying for a private sewage permit

When applying for a building permit, you must submit the following information to your local authority:

- details of the project or occupancy to be covered by the permit.
- details of the land on which the project will be located, including a description that will easily identify and locate the building site.
- plans, specifications and other documents as required by the permit issuer.

Hire qualified tradespeople

Specific trades such as electricians, plumbers and gasfitters must be certified to work in Alberta. To find out if the tradespeople you are hiring need to be certified in Alberta or to verify an individual's status, you may contact The Apprenticeship and Industry Training office by calling 310-0000.

For a list of certified private sewage installers and designers, visit www.alberta.ca/private-sewage-certified-contractors-list.aspx

Call (or click) before you dig!

Alberta One Call will locate utility lines on your property. Call or click before you start any project that involves digging in your yard. Alberta One Call will locate gas, water, electricity, drainage, telephone and cable TV lines. Allow at least two full working days for Alberta One Call to locate your utility lines.



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Additional Resources

Resources are for purchase by visiting the links below:

- **Alberta Private Sewage Systems Standard of Practice**
www.qp.alberta.ca/Laws_Online.cfm
- **Alberta Private Sewage Systems Standard of Practice Handbook**
www.safetycodes.ab.ca/Public/Pages/Publications.aspx
- Visit www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/cp_index.cfm for additional resources.

Contact a certified contractor, your municipality, or Alberta Municipal Affairs if you are unsure how to site your PSTS.

Contact

Community and Technical Support branch of Municipal Affairs:

Hours: 8:15 am to 4:30 pm (open Monday to Friday, closed statutory holidays)

Toll free: 1-866-421-6929

Email: safety.services@gov.ab.ca

Safety Codes Council:

Toll free: 1-888-413-0099 (within Alberta)

Email: sccinfo@safetycodes.ab.ca

Web: safetycodes.ab.ca

Alberta Safety Codes Authority:

Toll free: 1-888-413-0099 (within Alberta)

Email: askasca@safetycodes.ab.ca

