

ALTERNATIVE ONSITE SEWAGE SYSTEM INSTALLATION
DEQ Specifications for No. RB-5

This document specifies terms and conditions that are applicable to all contracts entered into with respect to the *Alternative Onsite Sewage System Installation* best management practice (BMP) in NPS implementation areas.

A. Description

Installation of an alternative onsite sewage system to correct a malfunctioning or failing conventional onsite sewage system, malfunctioning or failing alternative onsite sewage system, or to replace an identified non-complying discharging system (e.g., straight pipe) in situations where installation or replacement of a conventional onsite sewage system cannot be permitted. An alternative onsite sewage system means a treatment works that is not a conventional onsite sewage system. Sewage refers to water-carried or non-water-carried human excrement, kitchen, laundry, shower, bath, or lavatory wastes separately or together with such underground, surface, stormwater or liquid waste as may be present from a residence.

B. Purpose

To improve water quality by removing raw or partially treated sewage on the land surface that can enter surface water or groundwater during storm events or sewage that is direct source of contamination to surface water or groundwater.

C. Policies and Specifications

1. Cost-share is authorized:

- i. For the pump-out and removal of solids from the septic tank.
- ii. For the installation of an alternative onsite sewage system that may include one or more of the following: aerobic treatment units, low-pressure distribution systems, drip distribution systems, sand filters, elevated sand mounds, constructed wetlands, peat filters, vault privies, incinerator toilets, and composting toilets or other treatment components or methodology approved by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH).
- iii. Gray water (from an identified non-complying discharging system, e.g., straight pipe), often considered kitchen, laundry, shower, or bath water, is considered sewage. If gray water is not connected to an onsite sewage system, this is a source eligible for connection, but only during the repair or replacement of a failing or failed onsite system. Gray water connections to public sewer independent of connections to replace a malfunctioning septic system (conventional or alternative) or straight pipe do not qualify. Costs can include the connection of gray water discharge from a dwelling that is discharging on the ground or in a wet/dry ditch to the existing system that will then be connected to public sewer. Any plumbing or equipment that is needed inside the dwelling to make the gray water connection to the system is not eligible for cost-share.
- iv. To cover expenses for up to two years of sampling, operation, and maintenance performed by a licensed Alternative Onsite Sewage System Operator (or approved alternative) and reported to VDH. Only recipients eligible for more than 50% cost-share (who have provided income verification) are eligible. An executed contract must be in place before cost-share is provided, and a copy of that

contract is provided as documentation. Documentation of these inspections must be provided upon request.

- v. For an inspection port to allow easier access for maintenance activities
 - vi. To re-stabilize and establish a vegetative cover on disturbed areas by regrading and planting seed as appropriate. Disturbed areas need to be stabilized by planting seed in accordance with the Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Standard and Specifications 3.31 (Permanent Seeding) and Specification 3.35 (Mulching). For slopes of 3:1 or greater, use 3.36 (Blankets and Matting).
 - vii. For the cost associated with design of the system using an appropriately licensed Alternative Onsite Soil Evaluator or Professional Engineer (PE).
 - viii. For permit fees associated with installation of alternative onsite sewage system (reimbursable upon installation and final approval of system by VDH).
2. The owner or agent shall obtain a written construction permit from the local Health Department.
 3. The owner or agent shall obtain any other permit(s) as required for installation of an alternative onsite sewage system and comply with local building codes.
 4. The owner or agent shall obtain and comply with any designs as required in the Health Department permit.
 5. The installation of the alternative onsite sewage system must be inspected by the licensed Alternative Onsite Soil Evaluator or Professional Engineer who certified the design, and all completion documentation must be provided to the local Health Department and an operation permit issued.
 6. If the old septic tank is not usable and is to be replaced, it must be properly abandoned by a licensed septic contractor. Proper abandonment includes pumping and proper disposal of the tank contents, crushing the tank lids or top into the tank, breaking the bottom so that it will not hold water, filling it with sand or other suitable fill material, and restoring the area to its original condition.
 7. The lifespan for this practice is 10 years. The period of lifespan starts on January 1 of the calendar year following the year of installation of the practice.
 8. Operation and Maintenance Statement: Acceptance of payment for this practice results in the recipient agreeing to maintain the alternative onsite sewage system for a minimum of 10 years unless the system is eliminated by connection to public sewer (RB-2). The recipient agrees to refund all or part of the funds received if the practice is found not to meet applicable standards and specifications, or if the BMP(s) is/are removed or not properly maintained during the lifespan of the practice. The sale, lease or changed use of the property will not exempt the recipient from fulfilling these requirements. Should the property change ownership or leasehold during the lifespan of the practice, the recipient agrees to complete an Agreement Transferring Responsibility for Best Management Practice form signed by all involved parties and submit that signed form to the Grantee identified in this agreement. More information on operation and maintenance can be found in the DEQ BMP manual and the Residential Septic Guidelines.

9. Exemption to the operation and maintenance requirement: An exemption to the above-referenced operation and maintenance requirement may be granted by the Grantee (with approval from DEQ) in the event that a participant decides to connect the system to public sewer (RB-2).
 - i. Connection to Public Sewer: The participant is not eligible for cost-share on the RB-2. However, if an exemption is granted, the participant will not be responsible for paying back the prorated cost-share amount remaining on the lifespan of the existing BMP if the participant agrees to maintain the new RB-2 practice for 10 years.
10. The cost-share application for permitted replacement application must include a copy of [VDH Condition Assessment Form](#) completed by VDH, OSE, a licensed installer, or a PE (if applicable).
11. “Assignment of Residential Septic Practice Cost-Share Authorization” and “Agreement Transferring Responsibility for Best Management Practice” forms for this practice are attached to the Residential Septic Guidelines.
12. Cost-share is not authorized:
 - i. For construction of new alternative onsite sewage system or existing such system upgrade on a lot to accommodate replacement of a residence with a new house or mobile home, nor for the permitted expansion of an existing alternative onsite system to accommodate the addition of a bedroom(s) being added to a residence.
 - ii. For fees associated with deed recordation in localities where it is required.
 - iii. If the septic system is currently under lifespan of another septic BMP. For example, if the participant has already received cost-share for an RB-3 repair or RB-4/4P replacement practice, it is still under lifespan, and the system needs an alternative system (RB-5), then that participant would not be eligible for additional DEQ NPS funds. The only exception to this rule is in those cases where the Grantee had issued a written (DEQ-approved) exemption to the original cost-shared practice and it is issued with the BMP contract at the time that the original practice was installed (see the Residential Septic Guidelines for more information).
 - iv. (For practices funded with 319(h) funds only.) For discharging systems requiring a permitted discharge or a discharge that receives a VPDES/NPDES permit.

D. Rate

The cost-share amount is based upon a total average estimated practice cost of \$24,000 per practice and will not exceed 50% to 90% of the total eligible cost based on participant income levels (based upon verification) in accordance with *Virginia’s Nonpoint Source (NPS) Implementation Best Management Practice (BMP) Guidelines*. The cost-share payment for this practice shall not exceed the BMP estimated average total cost-share cost, known as the practice cap associated with the approved cost-share rate for the participant.

A Grantee will request from DEQ the ability to use either the No Fiscal Stress or Fiscal Stress table (see Table RB-5 on the next page):

Table RB-5: Alternative Onsite Septic System Installation, rates based upon average total practice cost of \$24,000.

% of Median Family Income	No Fiscal Stress* Rate	No Fiscal Stress* CS Cap	Fiscal Stress** Rate	Fiscal Stress** CS Cap
> 120% or no income verification	50%	\$12,000	50%	\$12,000
100-120%	55%	\$13,200	65%	\$15,600
81-100%	60%	\$14,400	70%	\$16,800
61-80%	65%	\$15,600	75%	\$18,000
40-60%	75%	\$18,000	85%	\$20,400
<40%	80%	\$19,200	90%	\$21,600

* Located in locality with No Fiscal Stress (average, below average, or no FS)

** Located in Locality with Fiscal Stress (high or above average FS)

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