

Groundwater Protection



The mission of the Groundwater Protection Division is to protect the groundwater supply and the environment from pollutants for Knox County citizens by enforcing the laws governing onsite waste water systems and mobile home parks.

The Groundwater Protection Division of the Knox County Health Department regulates the installation on subsurface sewage disposal systems (SSDS). All residential and commercial facilities not connected to public sanitary sewer must have a SSDS to receive and treat all wastewater generated within the facility.

Environmental Specialists assist property owners in evaluating, designing and inspecting all SSDS installed in Knox County. Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) regulations and statutes govern the Knox County Health Department Groundwater Division. SSDS regulations and information can be accessed at <http://www.state.tn.us/environment/gwp/>.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q&A

Q: Does the Health Department have a record of the SSDS on my property?

A: Most likely. **Contact us at (865) 215-5200.**

Q: My SSDS is not working properly and needs to be repaired. Am I required to obtain a permit to repair my system?

A: All repairs, alterations and new constructions of SSDS require a permit from Knox County Health Department before any work is started on the system.

Q: How often should I pump my septic tank?

A: Septic tanks should be pumped and cleaned every 3-5 years with ordinary use and every 2-3 years if a garbage disposal is utilized.

Q: What kind of additives should I add to my septic tank to make it work properly?

A: Additives do not need to be added to your septic tank.

Q: I am building a new house and my builder told me that I must obtain a permit from the Health Department before I can build my house. What kind of permit do I need and how do I obtain the permit?

A: A SSDS Construction Permit from the Health Department is required before the Knox County Codes Enforcement Department will issue a building permit for your residence.

Q: I am selling my home and I was told that I needed a septic letter from the Health Department. What is a septic letter and how do I obtain one?

A: A septic letter is called a Verification. When you request this service, the Health Department reviews all files regarding your property and then visits the property to determine if the SSDS is working properly and if there is sufficient area available to repair the SSDS if it should fail in the future.

Q: How do I get my water tested?

A: The Health Department can conduct a bacteriological test only on private water supplies.

**For additional information please call:
(865) 215-5200**