



# Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services

## DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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### **POLICY FOR THE USE OF EXISTING SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS**

The use of an existing sewage disposal system for new or remodeling construction will be acceptable if the sewage disposal system is functioning properly and is sized appropriately for the proposed construction project. Remodeling which will not affect the sewage flow to the septic tank system, and will not impact the remaining potential repair area, will not require expansion, testing, or replacement of the existing septic tank system.

The acceptability of existing sewage disposal systems for new proposed development will be determined as follows:

1. Existing septic tank systems which were approved by the Division of Environmental Health (DEH) after January 1, 1980, or were based upon the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, August 1979 "Basin Plan Policy," will be acceptable for use without further testing if the system shows no sign of failure or damage, and the proposed development is compatible with the system as installed.
2. Existing septic tank systems installed prior to January 1, 1980, and without testing equivalent to the current Water Quality Control Board "Basin Plan Policy" will be evaluated for approval as follows:
  - A. Systems installed with a permit issued after March 20, 1974 will be inspected to determine if the existing system is functioning properly. Additionally, soil testing will be required in the reserve area to determine if a reserve system can be installed in conformance with the Humboldt County Sewage Disposal Regulations. Reserve area testing will not be required for single family residences when the change in use consists of construction of an additional bedroom or bedrooms, and the existing system is of the appropriate size for the increased flow. Both the existing system and the reserve system will be required to be of the appropriate size for the proposed use. Applicants may be requested to expose an existing system to verify its size and location where no record of a final inspection exists. Expansion of existing systems must be accomplished in accordance with Humboldt County Sewage Disposal Regulations.
  - B. Systems installed with a permit issued prior to March 21, 1974, or where no record of a permit exists, will be approved for use only after

soil testing in the primary and reserve leach field areas demonstrates that the site is suitable in accordance with the Humboldt County Sewage Disposal Regulations. Existing sewage disposal systems, which are functioning properly and are of the appropriate size, will be accepted for use as long as site testing demonstrates suitability. Expansion of a system must be accomplished in accordance with current Humboldt County Sewage Disposal Regulations. Site testing will not be required when the change in use consists of construction of an additional bedroom and the existing system is of the appropriate size for the increased flow.

The provisions of this policy may be waived where extreme hardship, such as a dwelling having been destroyed by fire, can be demonstrated.

For the purpose of this policy, replacement of an existing mobile home with a mobile home or preassembled housing with the same or fewer number of bedrooms is not considered a new use and site testing will not be required if the existing system shows no sign of failure or damage. Additionally, reserve area testing will not be required.

A reserve area is an area where an existing sewage disposal system can be repaired or replaced. This area may or may not be an area separate from the existing sewage disposal system.

This policy was approved by the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors on October 23, 1984.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:** The County does not discriminate on the basis of disability in services, programs, activities, or employment. Persons with disabilities requiring special assistance or accommodation can contact the Director of Environmental Health at (707) 445-6215.