



Humboldt County Department of Health and Human Services DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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On-Site Sewage Disposal System Requirements in Shelter Cove

Property owners who wish to build structures in the unsewered portion of the Shelter Cove subdivision must obtain an approved sewage disposal system (SDS) permit prior to the issuance of building permits. A qualified consultant must design the SDS based on a site evaluation, which includes percolation testing. The consultant's design is then submitted with an SDS permit application to the Humboldt County Building Division for review and approval by the Division of Environmental Health.

To find out if a particular lot is within the public sewer service area, you may contact the Shelter Cove Resort Improvement District (RID) by phone at (707) 986-7447 or on the internet at www.sheltercove-ca.gov. **Not all lots outside of the public sewer service area will meet the minimum requirements for the installation of an SDS.** The following is a **partial** list of the minimum requirements that apply to on-site sewage disposal systems in Humboldt County:

1. Leach trenches must be placed in native soils, with natural ground slopes no greater than 30 percent (i.e., the slope drops vertically no more than 3 feet for every 10 horizontal feet). Terracing or "benching" of steep lots for the purpose of installing or creating an area for an SDS is **not permitted**.
2. The leach trench may not be placed closer than 25 feet to cut banks or slope breaks (defined as the point where the slope exceeds 30 percent). Leach trenches may not be located closer than ten feet to building foundations or property lines. Also, leach fields must be located at least 100 feet away from a year-round stream or spring and 50 feet from an ephemeral stream. Leach trenches may not be placed beneath driveways or other paved surfaces.
3. Many areas of Shelter Cove have shallow bedrock layers and rocky outcrops. Impermeable soils, bedrock, or fractured rock with little soil development will not provide adequate treatment for septic tank effluent. A minimum of 3 feet of suitable unsaturated native soil must exist below the leach trench bottom.
4. A minimum design sewage flow of 300 gallons per day is required for residential development. Composting toilets or direct land application of sewage, including graywater discharge, are not permitted in lieu of an approved SDS.
5. In addition to the primary leachfield, a suitable "reserve" leachfield area (100% replacement area) must be identified on the property. This area must meet the same requirements as the primary area, and remain undisturbed on the lot.
6. SDS permit applications must meet state and local requirements without waiver. Plot plans accompanying the permit application must be drawn to scale.

Please note: In some cases, due to the unsuitability of site soils, limited area, or steepness of the lot, it may not be possible to locate a suitable site for the installation of an SDS. It is highly recommended that potential buyers of real estate in Shelter Cove hire a qualified consultant to perform a site evaluation prior to making a purchase decision.

Qualified consultants, as defined by the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, include registered civil engineers, professional geologists, registered environmental health specialists, or certified soil scientists, who have experience and training in the design of onsite sewage disposal systems.