Regulatory Framework Relevant to RCIM Work Group

Septic Tanks

Chapter 246-272A WAC regulates the location, design, installation, operation, maintenance, and monitoring of on-site sewage systems The chapter is intended to coordinate with other:statutes and rules for the design of on-site sewage systems under chapter 18.210 RCW and chapter 196-33 WAC.

A local board of health must apply to the state department of health to approve local regulations. They must be at least as stringent as the regulations of the state department. WAC 246-272A-0015 (9), (10).

The local health officer may required the owner of a failing septic systems located within 200 feet of a public sewer service to hook up to that system. WAC 246-272A-0025
Design specifications for septic tanks are located at WAC 246-272C.

The amount of land necessary for the installation of a septic tank varies depending upon soil type. Table X in WAC 246-272A.0320 establishes the minimums. Table V in WAC 246-272A-0220 describes the soil types.

TABLE X
Minimum Land Area Requirement
Single-Family Residence or Unit Volume of Sewage

Type of Water Supply	Soil Type (defined by WAC 246-272A-0220)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Public	0.5 acre	12,500 sq. ft.	15,000 sq. ft.	18,000 sq. ft.	20,000 sq. ft.	22,000 sq. ft.
	2.5 acre1					
Individual, on each lot	1.0 acre	1 acre	1 acre	1 acre	2 acres	2 acres
	2.5 acres1					

TABLE V
Soil Type Descriptions

Soil Type	Soil Textural Classifications
1	Gravelly and very gravelly coarse sands, all extremely gravelly soils excluding soil types 5 and 6, all soil

Soil Type	Soil Textural Classifications
	types with greater than or equal to 90% rock fragments.
2	Coarse sands.
3	Medium sands, loamy coarse sands, loamy medium sands.
4	Fine sands, loamy fine sands, sandy loams, loams.
5	Very fine sands, loamy very fine sands; or silt loams, sandy clay loams, clay loams and silty clay loams with a moderate or strong structure (excluding platy structure).
6	Other silt loams, sandy clay loams, clay loams, silty clay loams.
7 Unsuitable for treatment or dispersal	Sandy clay, clay, silty clay, strongly cemented or firm soils, soil with a moderate or strong platy structure, any soil with a massive structure, any soil with appreciable amounts of expanding clays.

WAC 246-272A-0270 provides that the owner of an on-site septic system is responsible for its operation:

(1) The OSS owner is responsible for operating, monitoring, and maintaining the OSS to minimize the risk of failure, and to accomplish this purpose, shall:

(a) Obtain approval from the local health officer before repairing, altering or expanding an OSS;

(b) Secure and renew contracts for periodic maintenance where required by the local health jurisdiction;

(c) Obtain and renew operation permits if required by the local health jurisdiction;

(d) Assure a complete evaluation of the system components and/or property to determine functionality, maintenance needs and compliance with regulations and any permits:

(i) At least once every three years for all systems consisting solely of a septic tank and gravity SSAS;

(ii) Annually for all other systems unless more frequent inspections are specified by the local health officer;

(e) Employ an approved pumper to remove the septage from the tank when the level of solids and scum indicates that removal is necessary;

(f) Provide maintenance and needed repairs to promptly return the system to a proper operating condition;

(g) Protect the OSS area and the reserve area from:

(i) Cover by structures or impervious material;

(ii) Surface drainage, and direct drains, such as footing or roof drains. The drainage must be directed away from the area where the OSS is located;

(iii) Soil compaction, for example by vehicular traffic or livestock; and

(iv) Damage by soil removal and grade alteration;

(h) Keep the flow of sewage to the OSS at or below the approved operating capacity and sewage quality;

(i) Operate and maintain systems as directed by the local health officer;

(j) Request assistance from the local health officer upon occurrence of a system failure or suspected system failure; and

(k) At the time of property transfer, provide to the buyer, maintenance records, if available, in addition to the completed seller disclosure statement in accordance with chapter 64.06 RCW for residential real property transfers.

Regulations for large on-site septic systems (LOSS) are found at WAC 264-272B.

Biosolids

Biosolids are a nutrient rich soil amendment derived from public waste treatment plant septage. The Department of Ecology's biosolid program is administered independently of other agencies, but coordinated with health districts. As used in the Department of Ecology's regulations, "biosolids" is the term used to refer to sewage sludge or septage that has been or is being treated to meet standards so that it can be applied to the land. Sewage sludge is the solid, semisolid, or liquid residue generated during the treatment of domestic sewage in a treatment works.

Biosolids are produced by treating sewage sludge to meet certain quality standards that allow it to be applied to the land for beneficial use. Septage is a class of biosolids that comes from septic tanks and similar systems receiving domestic wastes. WAC 173-308-050. Land application of biosolids requires pre-approval of application rates that are based upon agronomic crop requirements. Permittees receive coverage under a statewide general permit. Permit coverage is mandated for those who produce and/or land apply biosolids. The Department of Ecology's regulatory program incorporates site specific approvals with specific testing and analysis procedures, development of land application plans that prescribe specific practices and prohibitions, and a review and approval process for land application of the wastewater solids. Land application may only occur on permitted sites with pre-established buffers and setbacks. Application rates require advance approval based on pre-plant soil tests, evaluation of crop type and yield estimates, soil types, use of irrigation. Intermittent post-harvest tests are also conducted.

Municipal Lawns

There are no known laws or regulations regarding home-owner maintenance of residential lawns. There are also no known laws or regulations regarding municipal maintenance of parks or grounds

"Hobby Farms"

A "Hobby Farm" is a tract of land 10 acres or less that is not contained within the agricultural acreage reported by the Washington State Department of Agriculture, which may or may not contain a residence, upon which minimalist agriculture is maintained without the intention of profit. There are no known laws or regulations regarding maintenance of animals or herbaceous material on "hobby farms."

Underground Injection Wells: Part C of the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), 42 U.S.C. §300h-3 regulates underground injection wells. Washington's regulations about underground injection wells are found at WAC 173-218. Most UIC's in Yakima County are road based and county-owned, put in place to receive surface water runoff from county roads..