

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

ABOUT the SEWAGE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Following are some frequently asked questions and answers about the municipality's sewage management program.

What are the requirements of the sewage management program?

The municipality's ordinance, establishing a sewage management program, requires property owners with on-lot sewage disposal systems to have their treatment tank(s) (i.e. septic or aerobic tank) pumped and inspected every three years by a registered pumper/hauler. The pumper/hauler must submit the Sewage Management Report form after each pumping and inspection along with the administrative fee to North Londonderry Township.

Why is the municipality implementing a sewage management program?

By adopting a sewage management program, the municipality is ensuring that on-lot systems are operating properly and that the public's health is protected. Because on-lot systems discharge contaminants that may cause disease, it is important that such systems work properly to prevent these contaminants from reaching the surface of the ground and/or the groundwater, where the public's health is at risk. Treatment tanks serve to settle solids and trap scum to prevent clogging of the absorption area (drain field). That's why these accumulated solids and scum must be pumped out regularly to ensure proper operation of the system.

An inspection of the system helps to ensure that the system is operating properly and that no malfunction is evident. On-lot systems that are malfunctioning may require more frequent pumping, cleaning and unclogging of lines, and replacement of system components.

Why should I comply with this requirement?

First of all, it is the law. North Londonderry Township has enacted an ordinance establishing the sewage management program, and penalties are provided for those who do not comply.

However, there are numerous benefits associated with a sewage management program. These include the following:

- Maintains or improves the performance of on-lot systems.
 - Extends the useful life of a system and generally can help to reduce the costs associated with repairs and/or replacements.
 - Helps to prevent system malfunctions. Malfunctioning on-lot systems can affect public health and may lead to the need for costly community sewage collection and treatment systems (which may inadvertently promote unwanted development).
 - Can help to maintain existing property values and ease of property transfers.
 - Provides a less costly manner of sewage disposal (pumping tanks every three years) compared to monthly sewer bills if the home or building were connected instead to a public community sewage collection and treatment system.
 - Helps to prevent community-wide problems, such as health concerns or reduced property values because of malfunctioning on-lot sewage systems.
-

What if . . .

My on-lot sewage system is only used part-time during the year?

Although, in general, the three-year pumping and inspection requirements must be met, North Londonderry Township will consider valid requests with justification from property owners for a reduction in pumping frequency. We offer an alternative to pumping which is having a qualified inspector (someone from the pumper/hauler list) come out to evaluate the depth of solids and scum in the treatment tank(s). If the total depth of solids and scum **is less than 1/3** the total capacity of the tank you would qualify for an exemption from the current pumping cycle. We recommend having your tanks pumped if you are close to 1/3 capacity and have a small size tank.

You must complete an Exemption Application; send it along with the form for evaluating the solids and scum in treatment tanks (which the pumper/haulers must fill out) and the administrative fee to our department. Likewise, we are also authorized to increase the pumping frequency of on-lot system treatment tanks on properties for good cause, such as an undersized treatment tank, an above average solids buildup in the tank, use of a garbage disposal in the home or building, or a malfunctioning system.

I am the only person living at my house?

As explained above, North Londonderry Township will consider valid requests with justification from property owners for a reduction in pumping frequency. Again, you may qualify for an exemption by having a pumper/hauler evaluate the depth of solids and scum in the treatment tank (see above).

I have a holding tank, outhouse, or cesspool?

Any system within the municipality is required to be pumped and inspected.
