State of Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

Site Evaluation Guide

A site evaluation is required when you want to build or place a new house on an undeveloped piece of property that has never been evaluated for septic system approval. A Site Evaluation may also be required when you want to replace an old system with a new system at a different location on the property. The following exhibits are required for a site evaluation.

Click on the link to access forms and example documents.

Items required to process your application:

1. DEQ Application form and fee: Please make sure your application is complete. Incomplete applications cannot be accepted and will be returned.
2. Vicinity/Locator map: Please provide your address or specific GPS coordinates and a link to the Google map. On large parcels or in remote areas where the site is difficult to find, please upload to your application record a drawing that shows how to find your site and provide flagging at the entrance to your property.
3. Tax lot map: This map may be obtained at the local county assessor's office or planning department. Tax lot maps are also available online at ORMap.
4. Notice Authorizing Representative form: Required if someone other than the property owner is submitting the application.
5. Land Use Compatibility Statement or County planning approval:
   For Coos County: Zoning Compliance Letter from Planning Department.
   For Jackson, Baker, Union, and Wallowa Counties: DEQ does not require a Land Use Compatibility Statement or County planning approval before applying for a site evaluation, but a statement will be required before DEQ issues a Construction/ Installation permit. DEQ recommends that you contact your local planning department to check on other land-use criteria concerning your project. If you are in a flood zone, be sure to check with the National Flood Insurance Program, which may also affect your proposed system.
6. Site Plan for Site Evaluation: Show test pit locations, proposed and existing development, and physical features with corresponding measurements and distances. Show property lines, easements, roads, creeks, ponds and north direction on the plot plan. Show all existing and proposed water lines, wells and springs on your parcel and neighboring parcels. If property lines are within 200 feet of proposed development, lines must be flagged or staked from a known lot corner. See checklist for all requirements and a Sample Site Plan linked above.
7. Test Pits: The application is considered incomplete and will not be accepted until test pits are dug. Dig two or more test pits in the area for the proposed drainfield. Test pits should be approximately 75 feet apart and dug in accordance with guidelines described in: Test Pit Preparation for Onsite Sewage Evaluation. When in doubt, provide additional pits in multiple locations, if possible.

   Areas to avoid if possible:

   - Any area within 100 feet of lakes, year-round rivers, streams, springs, proposed or existing wells (including neighbors' wells).
   - Any area within 50 feet of an intermittent (flows for at least two months of the year, but not continuously throughout the year) stream or any pond, and irrigation ditches.

- Swale areas or landform depressions where surface water is likely to collect. Vegetation such as willows, wiregrass, spike rush, and mint may be indicators of wet soil conditions.
- Slopes greater than 45 percent (4.5 feet of drop in 10 linear feet).
- Areas that have been filled or where soil has been disturbed, modified, or removed.
- Any unstable landforms or areas influenced by unstable landforms (ex: landslide).
- Areas where groundwater is encountered at or near the surface.
- Areas with shallow soil depth (underlain by bedrock, hardpan, claypans, etc.) which may restrict movement of water and air, and growth of plant roots.
- Areas to be developed or disturbed for roads, buildings, etc. Stay at least 50 feet upslope from cuts greater than 30 inches in height escarpments that intersect a limiting soil layer.

Other information

The site evaluation Report includes a copy of the field worksheet and a letter explaining the next steps to obtain an installation permit or the reasons for denial and review processes available. The field worksheet includes a site sketch, a description of soil profiles from the test pits provided and the site conditions. Soil profile notes indicate depth, soil texture, soil color, and other soil properties that affect sewage treatment and disposal on the site. The sketch will show the location of the test pits, slope gradient and direction, most physical features (such as property lines, fences, roads, buildings, surface water, water source, power poles,) and other pertinent information.

A favorable site evaluation Report is a document that states the type and size of the septic systems for both the initial system and the replacement areas approved, and any special conditions or limitations of the specific site. The approval is valid until you or the next property owner obtain a permit and install the prescribed system. Any alteration (cutting, filling, well placement, development, etc.) of the natural conditions affecting the approved areas and required setbacks may invalidate the approval for the initial and replacement systems, making it impossible to issue an installation permit. You should retain this report and refer to it in the construction/installation permit application process.

Apply online. You can also mail or hand-deliver your application, fee and attachments to the appropriate **DEQ regional office**.

Translation or other formats

Español | 한국어 | 繁體中文 | Русский | Tiếng Việt | العربية

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