



State of Oregon  
Department of  
Environmental  
Quality

## Test Pit Preparation for Onsite Sewage Evaluations

### When do you need a “Test Pit?”

When you apply for a permit to construct an onsite sewage disposal system, a DEQ or County inspector will have to visit the proposed construction site. A test pit allows the inspector to test and examine the soil and soil layers and will help determine if it is appropriate to proceed with construction. This process is often referred to as a "site evaluation."

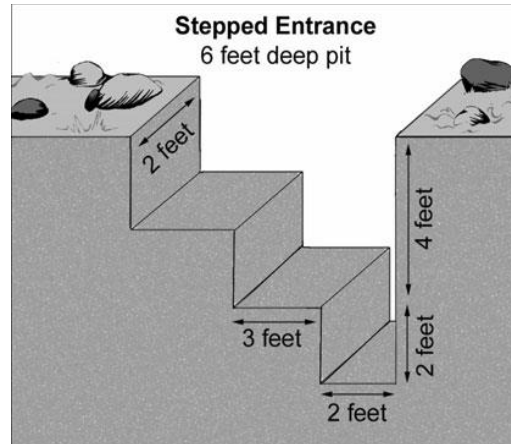
### Preparing the test pit

To provide for pit stabilization and safe access, standard test pits for site evaluations must be prepared in the following manner:

- The bottom of the pit shall be at least 2 feet wide and 4 feet long.
- The depth shall be at least 4.5 feet and not exceed 5 feet.
- In some instances, pits need only be excavated to the layer of hard rock or to the water table if that layer is less than 5 feet.

### 6-foot test pits

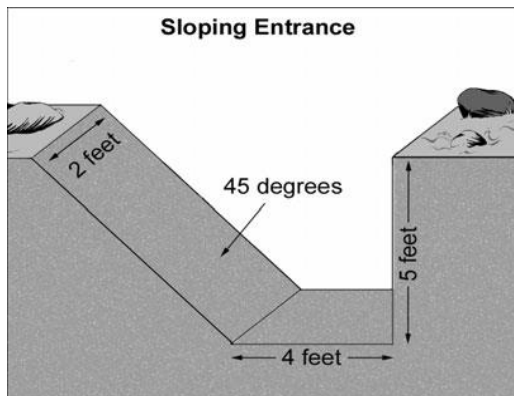
At the request of the inspector, test pits may need to be excavated to a depth of 6 feet as shown in the figure below:



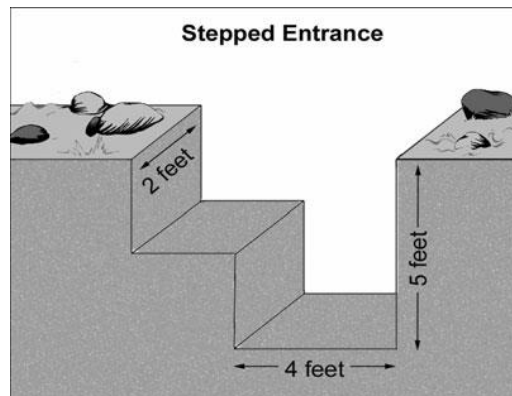
*The entrance to a 6-foot test pit may be sloped or stepped as soil conditions warrant.*

### Providing Access to the Standard Test Pits

For easy access, one end of the test pit shall be either:



*Sloped at approximately 45 degrees or less if the soils are dry or loose*



*Stepped when soils are wet*

All spoils need to be a minimum of 2 feet from the pit edge.

### Alternative formats

Documents can be provided upon request in an alternate format for individuals with disabilities or in a language other than English for people with limited English skills. To request a document in another format or language, call DEQ in Portland at 503-229-5696, or toll-free in Oregon at 800-452-4011, ext. 5696; or email [deqinfo@deq.state.or.us](mailto:deqinfo@deq.state.or.us).

### Onsite Program

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DEQ is a leader in restoring, maintaining and enhancing the quality of Oregon's air, land and water.