



MCHENRY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
2200 NORTH SEMINARY AVENUE
WOODSTOCK, ILLINOIS 60098
PH: 815-334-4585
FAX: 815-334-4637
WEBSITE: www.mcdh.info

FLOOD CLEAN-UP: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS

Q: Should I continue to use my onsite wastewater treatment system if it is under water?

A: No. Onsite wastewater treatment systems which are under water will not function properly and must not be used.

Q: What is an acceptable alternative if my onsite wastewater treatment system is under water?

A: The best option is to find alternative housing until the flood waters recede and it has been confirmed that the onsite wastewater treatment system is functioning properly. (Contact the McHenry County Housing Authority. Check with your insurance agent regarding your coverage or contact American Red Cross at 1-800-RED CROSS)

If alternative housing is not available, or when working at the property, it may be possible to utilize a portable (i.e. camper toilet) or chemical toilet temporarily. Please note that the portable toilet must be maintained to prevent nuisance conditions and must be emptied into a community sewer system. The use of a portable or chemical toilet is a temporary measure until flooding subsides and/or the structure becomes habitable.

Q: What do I do if I don't know where all of the components of my onsite wastewater treatment system are located?

A: Historical permit records, which indicate the type and location of your onsite wastewater treatment system, may be available at the McHenry County Department of Health (records after February 1, 2003), at the McHenry County Department of Planning & Development, or your municipality.

If no records are available, an Illinois Licensed Private Sewage Disposal System Installation or Pumping Contractor may be able to assist you in locating the components of your system. (See list of contractors link below.)

Q: Are there any other safety hazards associated with flooded onsite wastewater treatment systems?

A: Yes. Onsite wastewater treatment systems typically consist of pre-treatment tanks followed by some type of seepage system. Under flooded conditions, lids to tanks may become dislodged leaving submerged, uncovered vaults.

Aeration units and lift stations contain pumps and electrical components. Under flooded conditions, this may result in the creation of electrical hazards. Do not walk through floodwaters or utilize extension cords in flooded areas to provide electricity to these types of units.

Q: How do I protect my onsite wastewater treatment system from damage during the clean-up process?

A: Prevent any vehicular traffic over any of the components of your onsite wastewater treatment system. Prevent any activity over the onsite wastewater treatment system that will result in the compaction or disturbance of the soil conditions.

Q: What if my onsite wastewater treatment system is not operating properly after the floodwaters recede?

A: Contact an Illinois Licensed Private Sewage Disposal System Installation Contractor to evaluate the system and determine what repairs are required.

RELATED LINKS:

List of Licensed Pumping Contractors

<https://www.co.mchenry.il.us/county-government/departments-a-i/health-department/environmental-health/onsite-wastewater-treatment>

Everything You Wanted to Know About Your Septic System

<https://www.co.mchenry.il.us/county-government/departments-a-i/health-department/environmental-health/onsite-wastewater-treatment/educational-materials>

If you have any additional questions please contact the McHenry County Department of Health, Division of Environmental Health, at 815-334-4585.