



INDIVIDUAL SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM USE PERMIT PROGRAM

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

June 2011

Tri-County Health Department (TCHD) has developed a Use Permit Program that will apply to all Individual Sewage Disposal Systems (ISDS) within its jurisdiction of Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties beginning July 1, 2011. **A use permit is not required for existing homeowners until one of the circumstances described below in question 4 occurs.** The following questions and answers are intended to provide you with information about the program. If you have questions or comments, please submit them to: septicpermit@tchd.org.

1. Why has TCHD developed a Use Permit Program?

A Use Permit Program will accomplish the following:

- Identify ISDS that were never permitted and establish a record for those systems
- Identify failing or malfunctioning ISDS
- Discover problems that may be repaired in order to prevent larger problems or failures
- Clarify what specific circumstances will require that an ISDS be inspected
- Assure trained and certified inspectors do the inspections
- Establish uniform inspection criteria and requirements

2. What is a “Use Permit”?

A “Use Permit” expressly authorizes the use of an ISDS. Traditionally, TCHD has only issued permits to construct, repair, or expand an ISDS. That type of permit expires once the ISDS has been constructed and approved.

3. What is the purpose of a “Use Permit”?

- It recognizes that the owner of an ISDS is responsible for proper use and maintenance of his/her ISDS
- It assures that the ISDS is inspected and repaired after certain circumstances occur
- It verifies that the ISDS is not malfunctioning

4. What circumstances will require me to obtain or renew my “Use Permit”?

- Sale or change of ownership of the property served by an ISDS
- Change in use of the property. For example, if the residence is converted into a business or commercial use
- The addition of up to two bedrooms onto the residence
- The addition of a separate “modular” home onto the ISDS
- Other circumstances as determined by Tri-County Health Department



5. Who is required to obtain a “Use Permit”?

In cases where the home is being sold or changing ownership, the owner or seller of the home will be required to obtain the “Use Permit”. In all the other cases, the current owner of the property will be required to obtain the “Use Permit”.

6. How do I obtain a “Use Permit”?

- Have the system inspected by a TCHD-approved system inspector. These inspectors are independent and do not work for TCHD.
- Have the inspector complete the TCHD “Use Permit Inspection” form.
- Repair any deficient items found during the inspection; provide verification that those repairs were made.
- Submit an “Application for a Use Permit” to TCHD, a check for the fee and a copy of the complete inspection report.
- Provide proof that the septic tank has been pumped within the last four years. Please note that the inspector may require that the septic tank be pumped before the inspection, even if it was previously pumped within the last four years.

7. Who does the inspection and what does the inspector look for?

An approved and certified “third party” inspector will do the inspection. That inspector will check the septic tank, electrical connections, controls and pumps (if the ISDS has these), and the absorption area (leachfield). The inspector will need to inspect all items listed on the Tri-County Health Department inspection form and answer whether or not they are acceptable.

8. What if the inspector finds problems with the ISDS?

All deficiencies in the ISDS found by the inspector will need to be repaired before TCHD can issue a use permit. Examples of these include: electrical connections don’t meet code, damaged septic tank lids, pump not working, risers and lids more than 8 inches below grade, etc. You will need to provide verification that the repairs have been completed.

9. What does a “Use Permit” cost?

The proposed fee is \$90.00 and is pending approval by the TCHD Board of Health at the June meeting.

10. When will the requirement for a Use Permit begin?

TCHD will require Use Permits beginning July 1, 2011.

11. How do I find an inspector?

TCHD will maintain a list of licensed inspectors on their website, or interested parties can call one of our offices.



12. Who can apply for a “Use Permit”?

The owner, seller, or real estate agent may submit an application.

13. How do I find out information about my ISDS?

If the ISDS was originally permitted by TCHD, the record can be obtained from TCHD by calling one of our offices, or by submitting a request to septicpermit@tchd.org.

14. What if the inspector finds out the ISDS is malfunctioning?

If the inspector finds that the ISDS is malfunctioning (typically with surfacing sewage), the owner of the property will be required to obtain a repair permit from TCHD and repair the ISDS.

15. What if the ISDS is malfunctioning and the owner is not able to obtain a repair permit and complete the repairs?

TCHD will issue a conditional use permit if the purchaser will complete and submit an “agreement to repair” form to TCHD, and the form is approved by TCHD. The “agreement to repair” will require that the purchaser obtain a repair permit and complete the repair within a specified amount of time.

16. What are the next steps after I submit an application for a Use Permit?

Once you submit a completed application and inspection report, TCHD staff will review the application and report. If the application and inspection report are complete, TCHD will issue you a “Use Permit”. At this time, we anticipate that the “turnaround” time will be no more than two business days. If the inspection report indicates that there are deficiencies with the ISDS that have not been repaired, TCHD will notify you of what needs to be done in order for TCHD to approve the application. Once those issue(s) are resolved, TCHD will issue a Use Permit.

17. How long is a Use Permit valid?

A Use Permit is valid until one of the circumstances listed above in question number 4 occurs.

18. I have a property currently under contract; however, the closing date is not until after July 1, 2011, when the Use Permit Program becomes effective. Will I still need to obtain a Use Permit?

TCHD will waive the requirement for a use permit for properties under contract prior to July 1, 2011.