# INDIVIDUAL SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM (ISDS)
# STANDING WATER IN MONITORING PIPES

On a recent inspection, the inspector noted "standing water in standpipes" on the inspection form. What does this mean, and what should you do about it? Each absorption area is required to have a standpipe(s) or observation pipe(s) to allow the level of water in the absorption area to be observed. At the time of the inspection, water was observed in the observation pipe(s) of your ISDS. Occasional standing water may not be a problem; however, water that stands or "ponds" within the absorption area ("leachfield") for several weeks may be a result of one of the following problems:

1. A leaking plumbing fixture may be adding too much water into the ISDS. For example, a single leaking toilet can place 1000 gallons per day into your ISDS.
2. Too much water is being used in the house.
3. If your ISDS has trenches, the wastewater coming out of the septic tank is not being properly distributed to all the trenches.
4. The soils in the absorption area are clogged and are not absorbing the water at the design acceptance rate.

To address problems 1-3 above, the following are recommended.

1. Check your plumbing fixtures for leaks or hire a plumber to check the fixtures. If leaks are discovered, have them repaired as soon as possible.
2. Conserve water in the home. For example, if you do several loads of laundry on one particular day, do your laundry over several days instead.
3. Consider having a water meter installed to monitor the amount of water used in the home. The meter should be installed to only measure water used within the home. A typical ISDS is designed to accommodate 150 gallons of wastewater per day for each bedroom in the home. So, for a 3 bedroom home, the ISDS is designed for an average daily flow of 450 gallons.
4. If your ISDS has trenches and a distribution box, have the "d-box" checked to see if the outlet pipes are all at the same elevation. In some cases, the "d-box" may be buried below the ground and may need to be excavated. If the outlet pipes are not level, "speed levelers" are available to "level up" the pipes, and can be installed on the outlet pipes to adjust their elevations.
5. If your ISDS is a "drip irrigation" system that is dosed with a pump, have the pump floats and settings checked. Improper float settings may result in the absorption area receiving too much water each time the pump runs.

If standing water still persists after checking the above recommendations, it is possible that the soils in the absorption area are clogged and are not absorbing the water at the design acceptance rate. If this is the case, you should monitor the water level in the standpipe in the field on a monthly basis. If the water level in the standpipe is found to be increasing, you should consider expanding the ISDS by installing an additional absorption area (leachfield). This will allow the existing absorption area to "rest" and recover while the new absorption area is being used.