



Robert P. Astorino
County Executive

Department of Health
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To: Applicants and Design Professionals

From: Natasha Court P.E.
Associate Engineer
Bureau of Environmental Quality

Re: Guidelines for Abandoning Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS)

All SSTS must be properly abandoned to prevent future health and safety hazards such as, exposure to sewage; tank collapse, caving in or floating, from developing. The homeowner is responsible for the abandonment or removal process. It is important to ensure the abandonment or removal process is not a health or safety threat to those conducting the procedure, to the homeowners or to others in the community. To reduce these risks, it is strongly recommended that persons involved in the process wear appropriate personal protective gear.

Please allow the following to serve as guidance for abandoning an SSTS:

Tanks

- Disconnect power at the source to all electrical controls and remove all controls and panels. Remove all electrical lines (including buried service lines) that will not be used for other purposes.
- The entire contents of all tanks (septic, pump chamber, grease trap, overflow, cesspools, and leaching pits) in the system must be pumped by a licensed Septage Hauler.
- All tanks must be broken in place or removed so that liquid can not collect in the future.
- Back fill the hole or tanks with debris free sand, other granular material or clean fill/soil* that is compacted to prevent settling to prevent future cave-ins.
- Properly grade and establish vegetative cover.

* Free of organic material which will decay and generate gas and create voids

Absorption Fields/Beds/Galleys

- Since absorption beds and trenches are unlikely to collapse, they may be left intact. Maintain vegetative cover.
- Galleys may be left in place if there is no risk of future cave-ins.
- Sewage-contaminated soil around septic components is not required to be removed in order for the SSTS to be abandoned.
- If components of the absorption system are to be removed, a licensed Septic System Contractor must be employed to perform this work:
 - a. Allow ample time after the system is taken out of service and the tanks pumped to ensure the entire absorption field is completely dry.
 - b. A licensed Septage Hauler should pump all contents from all distribution/junction boxes in the system.
 - c. Remove the absorption system (pipes, aggregate, etc.).
 - d. Dispose of materials appropriately.
 - e. Properly grade and establish vegetative cover.

Should you have any questions, please contact 914-864-7333.