



Abandoning a Subsurface Sewage Treatment System

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This fact sheet provides the rule requirements and suggested guidelines for proper abandonment of a Subsurface Sewage Treatment System (SSTS).

Who can abandon a system?

Removal and disposal of the liquid contents in sewage tanks must be conducted by a licensed maintainer. Remaining abandonment activities, such as crushing and filling the tanks, must follow the provisions of Minn. R. 7080.2500; however, they may be performed by other contractors.

The person or business abandoning the system must complete and sign a record of abandonment, which then must be sent to the local government unit within 90 days of the abandonment date.

Must an abandoned system be disclosed at property transfer?

Yes. Minn. Stat. § 115.55, subd. 6(2) requires an abandoned system be disclosed to the buyer prior to signing an agreement to sell or transfer property. The disclosure must include a map showing the system location.

What are the abandonment options?

A SSTS can be abandoned in place, or it can be removed from the site.

Abandoning a system in place

If the removed septage is disposed of into a sewage or septage treatment facility, a written agreement must exist between the accepting facility and the maintenance business responsible for disposal.

If the removed septage is disposed through land application, follow your local government's ordinance requirements. If no local septage ordinance exists, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) Septage Management Guidelines contains necessary information on required state and federal land application methods and septage management.

The soil dispersal system (i.e. drainfield) can remain in place. Inspection pipes can be removed, backfilled, and disposed of in a mixed municipal solid waste landfill.

Sewage tanks, cesspools, leaching pits, drywells, seepage pits, vault privies, pit privies, and distribution devices must;

- have all solids and liquids (i.e. septage) removed and disposed of in accordance with Minn. R. 7080.2450, subp. 6 by a licensed maintenance business
- have all electrical devices and devices containing mercury removed and disposed of according to applicable regulations; and
- abandoned tanks or any other underground cavities must be crushed with the remaining cavity filled with soil or rock material

Future discharge into the system

Access for future discharge to the system must be permanently denied. This can be accomplished by removing the piping or filling the end of the supply pipe with grout.

Removal of abandoned systems

Precautions must be taken to prevent human contact with the contaminated materials. These include the distribution media, the surrounding soil or sand materials within a three foot distance of the system bottom, distribution pipes, the sewage tanks and any contaminated soil around leaky sewage tanks. Contaminated material also includes any soil that received sewage from a surfacing effluent.

Contaminated distribution piping, manifold, geotextile fabric, and other materials must be dried and disposed of in a mixed municipal solid waste landfill; they cannot be disposed of in a demolition landfill.

Contaminated soil material may be stockpiled prior to final disposal to allow time for pathogen die-off. The stockpiling site must meet all the separation distances for an SSTS, including **well and property line setbacks** and a three-foot vertical separation distance to periodically saturated soil or bedrock. Additionally, the stockpiled material must be covered with a minimum of six inches of uncontaminated soil and be protected from erosion. The local unit of government should be contacted for any additional or stricter ordinance requirements.

After the soil material has been stockpiled for a minimum of one year, it may be land applied in any location meeting the setback requirements of Minn. R. 4725.4450, covered with at least six inches of uncontaminated soil, and be protected from erosion. It may also be used to fill in the abandoned tank cavities.

Do you need more information?

For more information on the MPCA's SSTS program, please visit our Web site at www.pca.state.mn.us/programs/ists/ or call us at 651-296-6300, or toll free at 800-657-3864.