

Septic System Inspections - Frequently Asked Questions

My septic system is working fine. Why do I have to have it inspected?

A septic system can impact public health and the environment in a variety of ways, many of which may not be as obvious as surfacing sewage or a clogged toilet. A careful inspection of the system dramatically increases the chance that problems will be discovered, and can then be remedied. In addition, regular inspections of a septic system should lead to a longer life for the system by fixing small problems before they become big problems.

What will the county do if I don't have my system inspected?

Clallam County is currently educating homeowners on the new regulations and the importance of regular inspections, and is committed to working with homeowners rather than against them. We are updating our records and creating a compliance database. Administrative penalties or fines for non-compliance are under consideration. CCC 41.20.270(3) allows for fines of \$5/day up to \$300/yr.

Can I inspect my own system?

If your property is located in the Marine Recovery Area, the county must have a record of a professional inspection completed within the past 3 years, and a record drawing of the system location. You will need to take the required training to become certified to inspect your own system. Go to www.clallam.net/Septics201DIY for more information.

What septic system upgrades are required by the county?

There are no upgrades that are required by the county other than those that are related to a system that is failing. The service provider may recommend some upgrades such as risers or outlet filters to improve the operation and maintenance of your septic system.

How much does an inspection cost?

The cost of an inspection will vary depending on the size, complexity and accessibility of your system and its components. There is no fee required by the county to submit an inspection report unless it required for the sale of a home, a building permit or similar governmental action.

What happens if the inspection reveals that something is wrong with my septic system?

Depending on the nature of the problem, you may be required to repair or replace your septic system. A permit will be required, and you will need to work with a licensed designer or professional engineer.

Does my tank need to be pumped every time it is inspected?

No. The inspection will determine if your tank needs to be pumped. In general the tank will need to be pumped when the solid contents equals 1/3 of the tank volume; when the scum and sludge layers exceed 6 and 12 inches respectively; or for other reasons noted by your inspector.

Do I need to be present at the time of the inspection?

It is strongly recommended you be present during the inspection but it is not required.

Are other counties doing the same thing?

Yes. The counties bordering the Straits and Puget Sound are implementing similar programs to enforce the state regulations and other counties are moving forward with adopting the requirements.

For more information: www.clallam.net/septic