

Septic Pumping and OWTS Inspections

Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) inspections can occur for many reasons. Currently there are counties across the state of Colorado that have a requirement for an OWTS Inspection if there is a "Change of Use" on OWTS or if there is a "Title Transfer" or sale of the home. The OWTS inspection is to review the system and make sure that it is not malfunctioning and causing any public or environmental health issue and/or can handle the additional or change of "use".

Unfortunately for many people, a septic system is out of sight, out of mind. And they do not realize that their system may be struggling because they have not had it back up into their house. This OWTS inspection process helps to identify issues before they cause major damage or problems to the home or the system itself.

Many systems we look at are operational with no problems that need to be addressed.

With an Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) Inspection is always recommended by industry professionals that the tank be pumped at the time of inspection to verify the integrity of the tank and verify that there are no cracks or ground water infiltration into the tank below the water line.

In the case of foreclosures where the buyer may not yet be approved for the purchase, we have performed inspections without pumping, noting that the tank integrity was not fully verified and may be in question because it was not pumped at the time of inspection.

The services we provide for an OWTS Inspection:

Digging and/or locating the tank: to do either the pumping and/or inspection of the septic tank will require that all lids and components be exposed and are accessible. There are generally a minimum of 2 lids that we will need to access, more if it is an engineered system. If the lids are not to grade there will be a charge to excavate and expose the lids or any other component of the system. This charge starts at \$75 and goes up, depending on depth, hardness of ground, etc. The average charge for digging has been \$50-\$75 but can be more. NOTE: Current state and county codes now require that if the lids are not to grade that they be brought to grade for easier service and maintenance.

Septic Pumping: Fees are based on the tank's capacity or volume and the location or address of the property being serviced. The base rate varies for a minimum of 1,000 gallons and then there is a charge per gallon after the first 1,000 gallons. Call for the rate for the specific area.

Extra Length of Hose: If they cannot get within three lengths of hose to pump the septic tank "Additional Hose" charges may be incurred. Three lengths of hose is approximately 90' of hose. Any additional length of hose, after the first three, will be billed at \$30/length.

OWTS Inspection: Inspection Fees are based upon the location of the property where we will be traveling to and vary based upon the distance traveled. These fees do not include any excavation of the lids, etc. Call for the rate for the specific area.

Document Charges: Most counties provide their records at no charge and will email the files to us, however, if we have to pay the county to obtain the county records for a system – this fee will be passed on. There will be no additional charge if the records are faxed or emailed to us, however, if we have to physically go to the county and retrieve the record, then the cost of time and travel will be passed on. This fee will vary depending on the distance and time traveled to obtain the records. We will notify you before if there will be additional document charges.

Line Camera: We include in our basic OWTS Inspection price the scoping of the main sewer line from the house to the tank, if accessible. Accessible is defined as “from an external cleanout or from the tank. We do not pull toilets, gain access to the line from an internal cleanout, or access the sewer line from the roof. If we suspect a problem with any of the other lines; the outlet or STA lines, connecting lines between multiple tank systems and we need to verify the integrity of the line we will utilize our camera, if the line is accessible. Still pictures of any problems will be provided with the High Plains Sanitation Service Inspection Report. Basic camera service is included in the inspection fee; however, if there is extensive documentation that needs to be recorded from the camera additional charges may be incurred. The minimum fee is \$100/hour and will be billed in ¼ hour increments.

Full Line Scoping: If the main sewer line is accessible, we may be able to complete a sewer line scoping with video copies provided on a jump drive or via You Tube of the Inlet and/or Outlet line(s) up to 75' from the tank. This can be used to determine the integrity of the main sewage line from the house to the tank and/or the effluent line from the tank to the field. This would be above and beyond the Line Camera service we provide as part of the inspection. Our fee for this service at the time of pumping and/or inspection would be an additional \$175. If this process takes an extended time additional time charges may apply at \$100/hour billed in ¼ hour segments. If this is the only service being conducted, additional travel charges will apply.

Use Permit: We process any required Use Permit/Title Transfer application and paperwork as part of our service. We will forward all the necessary information to the county for approval and forward the Use Permit along with all the other reports to you or your designated agent for closing. Streamlining the process and making it more convenient for you the customer.

The current Use Permit Fees are as follows:

\$85 for Adams and Arapahoe County Health Departments

\$60 Douglas County Health Department

\$100 for Elbert County Health Department

(These are the current fees charged by the respective county for their Use Permit, and subject to change without notice.)

Administration Fee: All OWTS Inspection work will be charged a \$40 Administration Fee to cover the costs of preparing all necessary county paperwork.

Repair work: We offer certain minor repair and excavation services if needed. Quotes will be provided before the work is completed. Our prices are competitive, but the work is exceptional.

Our goal is to create a “one-stop-shop” approach to the septic inspection and Use Permit process making it simple, convenient, and less stressful for the clients.

Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties (formerly Tri County Health Department (TCHD)) & Elbert County Use Permit Program

In reference to the Use Permit Program:

Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties (formerly Tri County Health Department (TCHD)) instituted their Use Permit Program in July 2011; basically, what is now required is any home or property that is on an Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) or septic system and is changing “use” must have the septic tank pumped and a system inspection completed to ensure that the system is operating in accordance with the design and that it is not presenting any environmental or human health hazards. A Use Permit will be required for each system on a property.

Elbert County Health Department began their Use Permit Program in January 2013. Elbert County is following the same basic guidelines as set by Tri County Health Department.

Per State regulations (CO Reg 43) - the OWTS inspector must be certified with either a NAWT (National Association of Wastewater Transporters) or NSF (National Sanitation Foundation). There is a form provided by Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas or ECHDE that needs to be filled out by the inspector and submitted with an application and appropriate fee to Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas or ECDHE and they will issue the permit prior to the transaction or change of use. Change of use is triggered when a home is sold or if additional bedrooms are added or if it changes from a residence to a business (i.e. home-to-day care, or other business entity). There are many things that can qualify as change of use, but the primary reason is “sale” or “title transfer”.

The Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas or ECDHE OWTS Inspections are conducted to determine if the septic system will support the new use and/or to verify that the system is operating as it was designed and not causing any potential human or environmental health hazards.

The majority of the systems are functioning as designed and no additional work will be needed, and the process goes very smoothly. However, if issues are identified they will need to be repaired prior to Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas or ECDHE issuing the Use Permit for the completion of the title transfer.

The county will not stop the sale of property. If repairs need to be made and it is impossible to have them completed prior to the closing, there is an “Agreement to Repair” document that can be provided

indicating who will be responsible for the repairs and when they will be completed by. This document will allow the closing to go on as planned and the repairs to be made at a more convenient time.

What will you receive if you use our services.

A detailed inspection report with pictures describing the current condition of the system and any potential areas of concern and recommendations on repairs, maintenance, etc.

Paid Invoice for all work completed. We typically do not release the reports until payment has been made. If there is a specific situation where payment needs to be delayed, we will work with you in advance. Please call if you have any questions.

Any diagrams that may have to be created by High Plains Sanitation Service

Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas or ECDHE Use Permit