



CALIFORNIA

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Onsite wastewater regulations in California are not uniform across the State. At the State level, each of the nine regional water quality control boards have different policies that require different approaches to siting and design with a wide variation. In many cases, it is the local agencies (counties and cities) that have the driving regulations for siting, design and construction of onsite wastewater treatment systems. These too, vary widely across the State. The State is currently drafting statewide regulations and has a long process to work through before finalization.

The rules in California will be administered through the State's Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs). Those boards will work with local governments to ensure the statewide regulations are complied with for all new and repaired onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS). OWTS regulations are being developed now but have been delayed due consistent controversy. At present, State Water Resource Control Board (SWRCB) staff is expecting to publicly release draft OWTS regulations somewhere around May 2006. It is estimated that the regulations or some version thereof, will become effective approximately 16 months after the release date.

Current draft regulations do have a component of performance-based practice in them. The approach allows any technology to be used provided it is 'certified' by an engineer or, in the case of proprietary technology, by a third party independent testing or data validation process. Prescriptive requirements are associated with some siting issues (minimum soil depth requirements).

As proposed, the California code will recognize management programs/contracts and management districts to monitor and maintain onsite systems or individual septic dispersal systems. The proposed draft regulations require all advanced treatment systems to have a contract service provider. Existing management programs currently in operation in the State of California include:

Stinson Beach County Water District
3785 Shoreline Highway
P.O. Box 245
Stinson Beach, **California** 94970
(415) 868-1333
(415) 868 9417 (fax)

Public Works Department
Town of Paradise
5555 Skyway
Paradise, **California** 95969
(530) 872-6291

Georgetown Divide PUD
6425 Main Street
P.O. Box 4240
Georgetown, **California** 95634

Greenstone County CSD
3451 Stagecoach Road
Placerville, **California** 95667
(530) 622-6120

Sea Ranch CSD
35600 Verdant View
Sea Ranch, **California** 95497
(707) 785-2756

The State of California does not require onsite professionals to be certified.

In the State of California, the Local Health Department (county or city) is responsible for conducting site evaluations before an onsite system is installed. However in some locations, the building departments handle this oversight.

Depending on the location, a designer may have to perform either a percolation test or a soils evaluation, or both as part of the site evaluation in the State of California. Most system oversight is done at the local level.

The State issues permits to larger systems. The local agencies issue permits for the smaller systems. The cutoff between state and local oversight depends on where the site is located, as it varies regionally across the State.

The State of California does not keep track of the number of permits issued state wide for new construction; the repair of existing systems; or for upgrade or modification on the onsite system. Different permits are required for alternative/experimental/innovative technologies at some locations the level of oversight is different.

California provides funding or financing options for individual homeowners for repair or replacement of a failing or malfunctioning system, but not for new construction of onsite wastewater treatment systems. For funding or financing options, one may contact:

Mr. Christopher Stevens, Chief
Project Development Section
Division of Financial Assistance
State Water Resources Control Board
PO Box 100
Sacramento, **California** 95814
(916) 341-5698
(916) 341-5707 (fax)
cstevens@waterboards.ca.gov

For information regarding onsite training programs available throughout the State of California, please contact the following:

California Environmental Health Assn. (CEHA)
77 Solano Square, PMB #245, Benicia, **California** 94510
(707) 751-0301
(707) 751-0301 (fax)
support@ceha.org

California Onsite Wastewater Association
Mr. Cliff Trammell, Executive Director
PO Box 6146, Santa Rosa, **California** 95406
707-579-4882
707-579-0117 (fax)
clifftr@msn.com

Currently there are no onsite wastewater demonstration, research, or testing projects ongoing in the State of California.