

**Guidelines for On-site System Maintainers Conducting
Time of Sale On-site Sewage System Inspections, as
Required by King County Board of Health Title 13**

**Public Health – Seattle & King County
On-site Sewage System
Operation & Maintenance Program**

Effective: May 1, 2020
(update to 2016 version)

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These guidelines are intended to clarify the King County requirements for a time of sale on-site sewage system (OSS) inspection, as required in the King County Board of Health code, Title 13. The purpose of the time of sale inspection is to provide complete and accurate information for the seller’s disclosure requirements so that the buyer is fully aware of the current status of the OSS. At the time of sale, the new owner becomes responsible for on-going maintenance and any repairs that are necessary.

The guidelines explain the components and reporting requirements of a time of sale inspection, which is conducted by an on-site system maintainer (OSM).

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Title 13 Code Requirement

The requirement for an OSS inspection at the time of property transfer is given in the King County Board of Health On-site Sewage System code, which is Title 13.

King County Board of Health Code 13.60.030 Operation and maintenance at time of sale.

A. The seller of any single family or multiple family residential property served by an OSS shall, prior to transfer of title to the property, have a monitoring and performance inspection performed by a licensed OSM. The licensed OSM shall file with the department an on-site system report and applicable fee in accordance with the fee schedule.

1. If no record drawing is on file with the department, the OSM shall prepare a record drawing and include it with the O&M report submitted to the department.

2. If a record drawing is on file with the department but does not accurately depict the OSS, the OSM shall prepare a reconciled record drawing and include it with the O&M report submitted to the department.

3. A monitoring and performance inspection is not required if such an inspection was performed within the previous 6 months.

4. At the time of property transfer, the owner shall provide, to the buyer, maintenance records, if available, in addition to the completed seller disclosure statement in accordance with chapter 64.06 RCW for residential real property transfers. (R&R No. 08-03 § 145, 2008).

Other relevant code excerpts:

13.08.226 Limited Repair. "Limited repair" means the replacement, addition, or alteration of a broken or malfunctioning building sewer pipe, sewage tank lid, sewage tank baffles, sewage tank pumps, pump control floats, pipes connecting multiple sewage tanks and drainfield inspection boxes and ports where the subsurface soil absorption system is not failing.

13.60.010.G. The person conducting the maintenance and performance monitoring inspection shall submit a system operation and maintenance/performance monitoring report, on forms provided by the health officer, to the owner at the time of the inspection and to the health officer accompanied by a filing fee as specified in the fee schedule within thirty days of the inspection.

Overview of Time of Sale Inspection Report

Who submits the report?

The on-site system maintainer (OSM) submits the inspection report through the websites OnlineRME.com and SkipThePaper.com.

When does the inspection need to be completed?

The inspection must be completed before the property changes ownership. Before closing, the buyer must also receive a copy of the complete Time of Sale Inspection Report, including any comments or attachments from Public Health (made within 10 business days from application submittal). The OSM is responsible to submit the time of sale inspection report through SkipThePaper.com within 30 days after the inspection.

Who pays for the report fee?

Either the seller or the buyer can pay the filing fee. Ultimately, the Title 13 code indicates that the seller is responsible for having this inspection report completed at the time of property transfer. The current filing fee is available at <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/environmental-health/piping/onsite-sewage-systems/~media/depts/health/environmental-health/documents/fees/wastewater-service-fees.ashx>.

What must be included in the Time of Sale Inspection Report?

1. **Operation/Performance Monitoring Report:** This is the form created in OnlineRME used for time of sale and routine maintenance inspections. Please select the Property Transfer inspection type.
2. **Time of Sale OSS Inspection Report Cover page:** The report cover page is completed in Skip the Paper (through the *Submit Work -> Application* function in OnlineRME) after the Operation/Performance Monitoring Report is submitted.
3. **Record Drawing or Site Sketch:** The OSM is responsible for including an accurate OSS site sketch or record drawing in the packet. See page 15 for explanation of site sketch requirements.
4. **Additional Comments:** If additional documents are needed, please submit site design documents, past building applications, or past operation checks separately under the heading "Additional Comments." Photos of the system components can also be submitted under this section. The OSM may include a copy of the most recent pumping report if it is available.

What happens after the OSM submits the Time of Sale Inspection Report to Public Health – Seattle & King County?

Public Health – Seattle & King County (PHSKC) will review the Time of Sale OSS Inspection Report for completeness and accuracy. This check will include Public Health accessing aerial photos and other property information to check for encroachments on the system components and new construction that may affect sewage flow. Staff will also check PHSKC's records for the property. Encroachments on system components, including designated reserve areas, should be noted by the maintainer. **PHSKC aims to review OSS Time of Sale Inspection Report within 10 business days of their submission.**

If the report is incomplete or inaccurate, the status will be changed to On Hold in SkipThePaper.com. Public Health staff will identify which item needs to be corrected via phone, email, or a comment on the report. The OSM will receive an email that the report has been placed on hold. The OSM is responsible for correcting the report or responding to explain circumstances **within 10 business days**.

PHSKC reviewers will also add comments to notify OSS owners of potential impacts to OSS performance or risks to public health identified during the inspection. If applicable, PHSKC may add comments about restrictions to property remodels.

Responses to Documented Problems with the OSS

Sewage leaking from any OSS component:

If the OSM finds any sewage surfacing, the OSM will document this in the Operation/Performance Monitoring Report and the Time of Sale Inspection Report cover page. PHSKC holds the current owner responsible for repairing a failed OSS. PHSKC will check their records to determine if a repair proposal has been submitted. If no repair proposal has been submitted, PHSKC will communicate with the property owner to ensure that a repair is completed. This may include contacting the OSM to gain additional information.

Other OSS failures as defined in King County Board of Health, Title 13:

Effluent backing up, unpermitted alterations and cesspools/seepage pits are included in this category. Comments will be added to the report explaining that the OSS is failing and needs to be repaired.

Signs of pre-failure or system not working properly:

If an OSM finds any signs that the system is pre-failing or is not working properly, they must indicate that in the Operation/Performance Monitoring Report form. The OSM must note the specific problem(s) in the comments section of the Operation/ Performance Monitoring Report, as the purpose of the inspection is to disclose to the buyer any OSS deficiencies. The two parties (seller and buyer) can then negotiate to determine who will correct the deficiencies.

Repairs during Time of Sale Inspections

Limited repairs and distribution box replacements may be completed by an OSM without a permit during the time of sale inspection and documented in the time of sale inspection report.

The limited repair permit exemption is only applicable if the repair was performed by the OSM company that completed the time of sale inspection.

A structural repair to a sewage tank or repair to the drainfield is not defined as a limited repair per King County BOH title 13, 13.08.226. As such, tank repairs must be completed through a repair permit by certified master installers. Repairs to the drainfield must be completed through a repair proposal by licensed OSS designers or professional engineers.

Exemptions and Waivers

Waivers:

Property owners may submit a request to waive the time of sale inspection requirement if the OSS meets the conditions specified below. There is no cost to submit the waiver application. Waiver forms are available on our website, and a sample waiver form can be found on the following page. Requests must be submitted with all supporting documentation. If the waiver is approved, the owner does not need to have a time of sale inspection performed.

Property owners will be required to give a copy of the waiver and supporting documentation to the property buyer before or at the time of closing.

OSS conditions that will be considered for a Time of Sale Inspection

Waiver:

- OSS has been inspected on a routine basis and a routine inspection report has been submitted by an OSM within the past six (6) months. Waivers will not be considered for approval if deficiencies have not been corrected.
 - Supporting documentation: most recent inspection report
- OSS has been abandoned due to recent connection to public sewer.
 - Supporting documentation: tank abandonment form
- Home has never been occupied (new construction) or has not been occupied since a replacement OSS was installed.
 - Supporting documentation: water or power use records to show that house has been vacant; approved as-built for replacement OSS
- Replacement OSS was installed and initial maintenance inspection is not due.
 - Supporting documentation: approved as-built for replacement OSS
 - Waiver requests will not be considered if the OSS initial maintenance inspection is due.

Type of OSS	Initial Inspection Due (Time interval following occupancy)
Gravity or Public Domain Technology	6 months
Proprietary Technology	45 days

Public Health- Seattle & King County
Request to Waive Title 13 Requirement:

On-Site Sewage System Report for Property Transfer

To be filled out and submitted by property owner. No fee for submittal.

Send to: Environmental Health, 14350 SE Eastgate Way, Bellevue, WA 98007
(206) 296-8050

Property Information

Property Owner(s) Name _____

First Name

Last Name

Contact Phone Number _____

Contact E-mail _____

Property Address _____

House #

Street address

City

Zip Code

Tax Parcel Number _____

Reason for Waiver Request

Please check all boxes that apply:

☐ A Routine Monitoring Inspection has been performed by a licensed On-Site System Maintainer within the last six months. Reports for this on-site septic system have been filed with Public Health on a regular basis according to the required monitoring schedule found in Title 13 table 13.60. If this box is checked, include a copy of the most recent inspection report.

☐ Home has never been occupied.

☐ Property has recently connected to public sewer.

☐ New/replacement OSS was installed and initial inspection is not due.

FOR DEPARTMENT USE ONLY:

Date waiver was received _____

Approved by _____ on _____

Disapproved by _____ on _____

Remarks: _____

Property owner must give a copy of the approved waiver application and inspection report to the buyer before closing.

How to Submit or Change a Report

Submitting a Time of Sale OSS Inspection Report

For instructions on how to submit a Time of Sale OSS Inspection Report, please refer to the link below:

<https://onlinerme.atlassian.net/wiki/display/ON/Onsite+Septic+System+Property+Sale+Process>. The

process includes the following steps:

1. Search and locate the property in OnlineRME.
2. Verify the property owner information
3. Verify the septic components
4. Enter the septic inspection
5. Locate or create the record drawing/site sketch
6. Finalize the property sale inspection.

Note: When uploading Operation/Performance monitoring reports to the SkipThePaper report, the completed inspection report should be saved and directly attached to the Time of Sale OSS Inspection Report. Scanned reports will not be accepted.

The OnlineRME and SkipThePaper.com Help pages explain the detailed steps for creating, modifying, and submitting reports. Both help pages can be accessed by pressing the “Help” button in the top-right-hand corner of the OnlineRME site, or at this link:

<https://onlinerme.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/ON/overview>.

Report Needs to be Changed

If OSM needs to change the Time of Sale OSS Inspection Report (in SkipThePaper), they can email PHSKC O&M staff and request that the report be placed on hold. Include a detailed description of what changes need to be made.

If OSM needs to change the Performance/Operation Monitoring Report, an Unlock Request should be submitted from the OnlineRME website. Include a detailed description of what changes need to be made. Once the changes have been made and the report has been locked, attach the modified Performance/Operation Monitoring Report to the Time of Sale OSS Inspection Report in SkipThePaper.com. This will notify the PHSKC reviewer that a change has been made. OSM may also email PHSKC O&M staff to request that the report be unlocked.

Operation/Performance Monitoring Report General Guidelines

- The Operation/Performance Monitoring Report should include the status of the OSS upon arrival at the site, with comments indicating any corrections made to deficiencies.
- Before completing a maintenance inspection, confirm that the OSS system components are accurate and complete. If changes are needed, add or remove components following the instructions on the OnlineRME help page.
- For each OSS component, the OSM must indicate whether it was fully inspected, partially inspected, or not inspected. The OSM should select fully inspected only if all questions for that component can be answered based on observations made during the inspection. When a distribution box is not accessible, but the performance of the distribution box has been assessed with a stress test, the distribution box should be marked as partially inspected.
- Correction status: “All corrections made” should be selected only if all deficiencies identified in the inspection report have been corrected. For example, if improper encroachment was identified and has not been corrected, the OSM should not select “All corrections made.” If other deficiencies have been corrected, the OSM should select “Some corrections made.”
- **The OSS TOS Inspection Report must include an inspection of all accessible on-site wastewater treatment components for all structures generating wastewater. If the components are not accessible, the report must include a comment describing the current conditions.** Please be sure to review King County Assessor’s records, verify with the client, and check aerial photos or real-estate listings to determine whether there are additional structures on the property that might have wastewater connections. The property owner needs to disclose all connections to the residential OSS, as well as any other OSS serving any other building on the property, including any former OSS that have not been properly abandoned.

Overview of Time of Sale Inspection Report Cover Page

This section describes the questions included in each part of the Time of Sale Inspection Report Cover Page. The descriptions in the right column provide guidelines for the answer options.

Addresses Section

Addresses	
Applicant's Address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OSM Name - Company - Address - OSM Number - Contact Methods (E-mail, Phone) 	
Applicant Contact Methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - E-mail - Phone 	
Property Owner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name - Address - Contact Methods (E-mail, Phone) 	<p>Property owner or representative's e-mail address: In many cases, the customer has already received the maintainer's inspection report by the time the report is submitted for PHSKC's review. As PHSKC's findings and recommendations should be discoverable at the time of sale, the OSM is responsible to provide the final report to the customer.</p> <p>In order to facilitate this, the OSM can add the customer's email address, or contact information for their legal representative, to the SkipThePaper.com application. The customer or legal representative will then directly receive the final report if comments are made. The customer's contact information will not be visible in the final report that is available on OnlineRME.</p>
Seller's Agent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact Methods (E-mail) 	
Buyer's Agent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact Methods (E-mail) 	
Title or Escrow Company <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact Methods (E-mail) 	
Property Being Reported Tax Parcel Number	<p>Property tax parcel number and address can be obtained and/or verified by searching on the King County iMap website: https://www.kingcounty.gov/services/gis/Maps/imap.aspx</p> <p>Please enter tax parcel numbers as 10-digit numbers without any dashes or spaces. (For example, the accepted format is 0256678890, not 025667-8890 or 025667 8890.)</p>
Property Address	

Overview Questions

Overview	
Has the house been occupied over the last 24 hours?	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Unknown</p>
The OSS Site Drawing included is	<p>Existing - Check if the most recent OSS drawing on file with PHSKC is accurate.</p> <p>Updated- Check if the most recent OSS drawing was inaccurate and the included drawing is an updated drawing. See Minimum Drawing Requirements section for further details.</p> <p>New- Check if no record drawing is on file with PHSKC and a new site sketch is submitted.</p>
Water Supply	<p>Confirm the water supply with the owner or real estate agent.</p> <p>Public- Check if the water system contains fifteen (15) or more connections (Group A well) or the property is served by a municipal public system.</p> <p>Group B- Check if the water system contains two (2) to fourteen (14) connections. Group B water systems are commonly referred to as “community systems.”</p> <p>Individual- Check if the property is served by a private well, with only one connection.</p>
Approved bedrooms according to site design	<p>1-12 Number of bedrooms- The number of bedrooms the system was approved for can be found on the cover page of most recent approved Site Applications. The OSM should report the number of bedrooms from the site application or, if this is not available, from a record drawing. No other information sources (e.g. client’s report, Department of Assessments, King County Parcel Viewer or iMap, sale listing, building permit application, etc.) may be used to answer this question.</p> <p>If the OSS has been repaired and the original site design is no longer applicable, the option “information unavailable” should be used to answer this question.</p> <p>N/A (designed prior to bedroom-based designs - 1972) Prior to the 1972 OSS code, King County did not use the number of bedrooms to determine the size of the system. If the house was built around the 1970’s or earlier, be sure to check with PHSKC records to verify if there are any newer applications such as a repair or building remodel that required the system to be modified (any newer</p>

	<p>records on file may indicate the number of bedrooms the system was approved for).</p> <p>Information unavailable- Check if there are no records on file with the Health Department indicating the number of bedrooms that the current system was designed for. This is the case if there are no records on file or the OSS has been repaired and the number of bedrooms is not specified in the repair documents.</p>
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Septic System – General Questions

Septic System - General	
Date tank last pumped (N/A if unknown)	Date or N/A if date is unknown

Onsite Sewage System Failure

Please indicate the items that apply if the on-site sewage system is failing as defined in King County Board of Health Title 13, section 13.08.152, and the problem has not been repaired.

On-site Sewage System Failure	
Upon arrival, was the septic system failing per King County Board of Health Title 13 definition?	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>
Type of failure:	<p>Effluent Surfacing – effluent is visible on ground or ground is very soft with sewage odor (<i>Note: This is not the same as backing up during a stress test.</i>)</p> <p>Effluent leaking from OSS components – soft ground around OSS components that clearly indicates leakage, tank level low, OSS components not watertight</p> <p>Effluent backing up or draining slowly – effluent is backing up into the house</p> <p>OSS has a cesspool, seepage pit, dry well, or pit privy</p>
Was the septic system failure corrected?	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>

Gravity Septic System Questions

Gravity Septic Systems	
Is the septic system gravity?	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>

Condition of distribution box (For serial distribution: Condition of inspection box)	<p>_____ Working properly- Check if all lines show no settling, no backflow, lines are securely connected to the distribution box, and the D-box has not disintegrated or cracked.</p> <p>_____ Not working properly- Check if the distribution box shows that any lines have settled causing unequal distribution, if backflow is observed, lines are not secured to the distribution box, and if the distribution box has disintegrated or cracked.</p> <p>_____ Not inspected- In some conditions, the distribution box is reasonably inaccessible, for example more than 3 feet deep, hundreds of feet from the tank, or no record drawing on file. In these cases, the OSM should make their best effort to locate the d-box. If it is not located, the OSM must describe what methods were used to locate the distribution box or reasons why it was inaccessible in the further explanation of distribution box section below.</p> <p>_____ N/A- Check only if the OSS system has no distribution box. If a distribution box is shown on the record drawing, the OSM should select “not inspected” or include explanation of why the OSS no longer has a d-box in the Operation/Performance Monitoring Report comments.)</p>
Stress test: Gallons accepted by drainfield without backing up	Specify number of gallons <u>accepted</u> by the OSS and the duration of the test in minutes. A minimum 150 gallon test is required if house is occupied or a 450 gallon test if the house was unoccupied over the last 24 hours.
Stress test: Duration of test in minutes	A stress test is required for Gravity and pump to Gravity Systems. Filling a five gallon bucket to determine the average flow per minute is sufficient to determine stress test volume.
Did the drainfield accept the water from the stress test without backing up?	Yes No

Pressure Distribution System Questions

The minimum requirements for a pressure distribution system are to perform a drawdown test and report results in gallons per minute and to report the status of the high water alarm and float.

If a pressure distribution pump is replaced, the maintainer must pressure check the farthest lateral.

Does the septic system utilize pressure distribution?	Yes No
Draw-down test result (gallons per minute)	

Advanced Treatment and Distribution Systems

OSS that depend on pressure distribution and also incorporate an additional treatment or disposal technology (all public domain and proprietary treatment and distribution systems) must be completely inspected, and all questions on the OnlineRME Operation/Performance monitoring report must be reported. Proprietary treatment and distribution systems must be inspected per manufacturer's guidelines, which may require certification by the manufacturer.

OSS Drawing Requirements for Time of Sale OSS Inspection Report

Every Time of Sale On-Site Sewage System (OSS) Inspection Report must include an accurate OSS drawing (King County Board of Health Code, 13.60.030). If there is no drawing on file with the Health Department or the most recent drawing does not accurately show the site or OSS components, the on-site system maintainer (OSM) or a state-licensed OSS designer must create a new site sketch or update the existing drawing.

The purpose of submitting a new or updated site sketch is to:

- 1) provide a reference to locate current components of the OSS
- 2) identify and document changes (permitted or unpermitted) made to the OSS since the original record drawing was submitted
- 3) document encroachment of items within the minimum horizontal separations outlined in the King County Board of Health Code (KCBOH)
- 4) document insufficient protection of the OSS area, including the reserve area, as outlined in KCBOH 13.60.005.6. This includes:
 - a. cover by structures or impervious material;
 - b. surface drainage;
 - c. soil compaction, for example, by vehicular traffic or livestock; and
 - d. damage by soil removal and grade alteration.

By providing this reference and documenting changes, encroachment, or insufficient protection, new owners of the property will be informed of the conditions that may impact their OSS and reduce sewage treatment.

Use of Filed Records

If an existing drawing accurately shows the location of some of the necessary components, the OSM may:

- 1) add updates to the existing record drawing or site sketch, **OR**
- 2) create a new, accurate site sketch, **OR**
- 3) upload multiple drawings that, if combined, show all required items.

The OSM should not erase content from a previous drawing. If required items are not all present on a single drawing, OSM must include a comment that explains why multiple drawings were attached. If an original record drawing shows the location of the drainfield laterals and the OSM created an updated site sketch without the drainfield laterals shown, the original record drawing should be attached in the "As-built or New/Modified Construction Record" in addition to the updated site sketch.

Reporting Updated or New Site Sketch

The OSM must report in the Time of Sale OSS Inspection Report and the Operation/Performance Monitoring Report whether a new or updated site sketch was created. A **new** site sketch is created when no record drawing or site sketch is on file with the department. An **updated (previously "modified")** site sketch is created when a drawing is on file with Public Health, but the OSM created a site sketch to show additional property information.

Required Layout of New Site Sketch

A site sketch must be drawn on paper sized 8.5" X 11", 11" X 14" or 11" X 17" and be of scanning quality. Site sketches must include approximate property lines. King County ParcelViewer or a previously-

approved drawing can be used as the source for the parcel lines. Site sketches must meet **one** of the following requirements:

- 1) Scaled using a scale of 1"=20' or 1"=30' **OR**
- 2) Drawn with dimensions of all required items and the distances between items clearly indicated

Items Required on Submitted OSS Drawing

The items listed in the following table must be displayed on the submitted drawing if they are present on the property and within the given distances from the OSS components, including the reserve area. These distances are intended to reflect the minimum horizontal separations table in the King County Board of Health Code, while minimizing the work required to update or create a site sketch to depict the current status of the property.

Note that the OSM is not required to locate the drainfield laterals during the time of sale inspection and the reserve drainfield area may not be indicated or apparent, so the OSM should use their best judgement to determine whether the required items may be within the specified distances from the drainfield laterals and reserve drainfield area.

Distance from OSS Components	Items Required on Site Sketch
Include in ALL updated site sketches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correct footprint of all plumbed structures served by OSS (In the case of additions to structures, no change to the footprint in a previous drawing is needed if the location of the tanks in relation to the new structure is still readily discernible and the new structure is not within 30 feet of OSS components) • Building sewer lines • OSS tanks • If gravity system, location of distribution box and direction of lines leading in and out of distribution box • If pressure distribution or subsurface drip system, endpoint location of all manifolds and laterals • If drainfield is located on easement, include comment describing easement location • If present, location of any treatment or distribution device (sandfilter, mound, upflow sandfilter pods, or other treatment devices) • Direction North indicator • If scaled drawing, scale used • Address and tax parcel number • Date drawing was created/updated • Name and certification number of OSM who created/updated drawing
5 ft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driveways (paved, gravel, or otherwise indicated) • Impervious cover (including parking area, patio, sports court, etc.) • Deck (with post and pier or post and block supports; if deck is cantilevered, recommend including comment in report or on site sketch)
30 ft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footprint of building structures with impervious foundations, including residence, accessory dwelling unit, garage, sheds with foundations, etc. If structure does not have an impervious foundation, OSM can include a comment in the report. • Swimming pool • Seasonal water
100 ft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well head and/or water supply line • Surface water