
ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03301 • (603) 271-3503 • www.des.nh.gov

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Permitting a Septage Facility in New Hampshire

What is a septage facility?

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) Administrative Rules Env-Wq 1602.32 defines septage as: "the material removed from septic tanks, cesspools, holding tanks, or other sewage treatment storage units, excluding sewage sludge from public treatment works and industrial waste and any other sludge. Septage includes solids and other material removed from septage lagoons, waste from portable toilet and Type III marine sanitation devices, and grease interceptor waste that has been co-mingled with wastewater.

A *septage facility* is defined as a location or system for the processing, treatment, or disposal of septage, other than land application. Facilities include, but are not limited to; septage lagoons, septage treatment facilities, and innovative/alternative waste treatment or research and development septage facilities. Septage Facilities do not include septage holding or storage/transfer tanks.

Why permit a septage facility?

There are many economical, environmental and public health reasons for people, businesses and municipalities to develop and maintain a septage treatment facility. In addition, RSA 485-A:5-b requires that every New Hampshire municipality provide or assure access to a septage disposal facility for its residents. As New Hampshire's population increases, so does the need to develop solutions for septage management. More than 1 in 5 households in the United States depend on individual septic systems; in New Hampshire about ½ of all homes are served by individual systems. Septage haulers must find septage facilities willing to accept septage. Although more than 87% of New Hampshire's septage is disposed at sewage wastewater treatment plants, the increased volume of septage can be problematic for treatment plants that have already reached their design flow capacity. This fosters the need to develop new septage treatment capacity.

How do I obtain a permit?

Persons wishing to manage septage outside of a regulated location such as wastewater treatment plants, solid waste facilities, or groundwater management facilities, must first obtain a septage facility, transfer/storage permit, or septage holding tank permit-by-notification approval, issued in accordance with Env-Wq 1603.01.

The person proposing to undertake septage management activities at their own facility, shall apply for a *Septage Facility Permit* through NHDES' Wastewater Engineering Bureau. The permit process requires the applicant to evaluate the site for suitability, including determining: existing soils characteristics; proximity to

surface waters, threatened or endangered species, proximity to designated rivers, groundwater protection areas, and other sensitive resources and surrounding land uses, etc.

The applicant must also provide a septage facility management plan including; a closure plan, the normal hours of operation, names and credentials of operators, stockpile transfer and holding tank provisions, the volume of septage expected on a periodic basis and for the life expectancy of the facility. This plan must also include a contingency plan for emergency situations, such as fires, and a detailed odor and pest control plan. The closure plan shall include methods of removing all septage material and the intended final deposition area of the materials; revegetation plans of the facility site and a description of the post-closure monitoring and maintenance required to meet long-term groundwater quality standards.

If a *Septage Facility Permit* is issued by NHDES, the permit holder must adhere to very specific federal and state regulations and standards, best management practices, groundwater monitoring, and permit conditions that protect human health and the environment, and meet annual reporting requirements.

How do I obtain additional information?

Additional information related to septage and sludge can be found at the [NHDES Wastewater Engineering Residuals Management](#) page, including the [Septage Management Rules, Env-Wq 1600](#) and the [Septage Facility Application Form](#). You may also contact us via email at: SludgeandSeptage@des.nh.gov.