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Number: ONST.07.POL.840  
Title: WET SEASON STUDY

Related: ONST.07.PRO.840  
ONST.07.GUI.840

Approved:   
Environmental Health Director  
Date: 11/2/07

Cancels: ONST.POL.811.99

RCW/Code: Article IV

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Purpose: To define when a wet season study may be requested or required, conditions under which valid observations can be made, and how the results shall be used in review of related sewage system permit applications.

**1. Wet Season Studies may be requested or required.**

- a. Required by the Thurston County Board of Health or Health Officer
- b. Required as a result of an administrative hearing
- c. Required when the winter water table level cannot be accurately predicted due to soil conditions or other on-site factors.
- d. Required when a deep trench system is proposed as per (GUI EH-WWS-002).
- e. Required when the receiving soil is Type 1, and a water table is suspected within the upper 60".
- f. Requested by a property owner in writing when a design has been submitted and is not approvable as a result of inadequate vertical or horizontal separation to probable winter water levels.
- g. Requested by a property owner when there is not agreement among parties that there is at least 18" of suitable soil above a seasonally saturated horizon (as described in the RS&G's for Mound Systems, 2/15/2000).

**2. Studies will be conducted during the Wet Season.**

As explained in ONST.07.POL.841, ONST.07.GUI.843 Technical Guidelines and ONST.07.POL.842.

**3. Environmental health field staff will conduct on-site investigations.**

Environmental health field staff will visit the site at least twice a month, typically during the months of December, January, February, and March. Observations of any water levels in the monitoring ports or surface water will be made and recorded. This shall not preclude the licensed designer or engineer from conducting a concurrent investigation.

**4. Consistent procedures and methods shall be used.**

The applicant, his/her designer, and environmental health staff shall use the procedures



noted in ONST.07.PRO.840 and technical considerations and methods noted in ONST.07.GUI.840 TECHNICAL GUIDELINES.

**5. Results shall be used in review of sewage system designs and permits.**

Results from the observations on study sites during a representative season shall be used in reviewing permits and development proposals. The information will typically be used to establish what vertical separation exists above the highest water table in the soil profile. This will assist in determining what type of sewage system (if any) will meet regulatory requirements. The information may be used to establish horizontal setback distances from sewage system components to surface water (as defined in Article IV). Deep Trench systems will not be permitted for new construction projects if the deeper receiving soils are saturated. A Wet Season Study is not required to utilize deeper soils for dispersal for a sewage system repair defined in Article IV. Additional information of the review and use of Deep Trench systems appears in ONST.02.POL.822. If the Rainy Season is considered representative, study results will generally be considered "conclusive".

Continuing evaluations in an area that has been determined to be unacceptable will not be considered useful or appropriate unless site modifications have been made to improve drainage or otherwise lower water levels. Continuing evaluations may be conducted where extenuating circumstances present during the original evaluation have been addressed.

**6. Data for a Wet Season Study will only be accepted from designers, professional engineers or certified soil scientists per Article IV and WAC 272A.**

**7. Wet Season Study for soil depths between 12"-18".**

Wet season studies can be waived if the designer and health officer agree on the depth of the seasonal water table and the site is otherwise acceptable for an on-site sewage system. The sewage system proposal must design for twelve (12) inches of suitable soil.

**8. A Wet Season Study is specific to Environmental Health.**

Not all applicable permitting agency reviews are conducted and completed with this type of application. Passing a winter water study may not correspond to building site approval.