

**Thurston County  
Permitting System Policies & Procedures**

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**Number:** ONST.12.POL.837

**Title:** MINIMUM OPC REQUIREMENTS IN MARINE RECOVERY AREAS (MRA)

**Related:** ONST.12.POL.826-829  
ONST.12.POL.831  
ONST.12.POL.833-35

**Approved:**   
**Environmental Health Director**

**Date:** 04/06/12

**Cancels:** ONST.06.POL.837

**RCW/Code:** Article IV, Sec 22.2, WAC  
246-272A; Recommended Standards &  
Guidance Documents Adopted by  
Reference

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**Purpose:** List minimum requirements for operational certificates for on-site sewage systems in the MRA.

1. **Operation, maintenance, and inspections must include all components of a system.**
2. **The minimum requirements for operation and maintenance are as follows when system component is present:**

**TANK**

A. **Tanks** (any size and including septic, trash, and processing tanks): Before operational certificate expiration date, check the following:

1. Septic tank scum/sludge levels: Pump tank when the sludge depth, plus the scum depth, is greater than one-third of the working depth of the tank. If scum/sludge levels near 'need to pump', check depths annually.
2. Pumping:
  - Must use a septic tank pumper that is certified in Thurston County to pump and clean septic tank and/or system components.
  - Must pump all compartments of tank(s).
  - Must check structural integrity of tank after pumping when empty
3. Effluent level: Should be at invert of outlet pipe.
4. Baffles:
  - Condition: If not intact, must be repaired
  - Inlet baffle: Flow should start and stop with water use inside the structure
  - Outlet baffle: If effluent is running back into tank or effluent level is higher than outlet, there may be an hydraulic overload or drainfield problem to address. Investigate.

B. **Effluent filter / screen:** Remove and rinse off every 6 months or as needed to prevent clogging / build-up. Replace as needed.

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- C. **Holding tank:** Pump as needed or as indicated by the high-level alarm or float assembly.
- D. **Grease trap:** Every 6 months the trap's grease and sludge levels must be evaluated and pumped if: less than half (50%) of its grease removal capacity remains, OR there is more than one foot of sludge.

**PRETREATMENT**

**E. Media filters (sand filter is an example):**

- 1. Check area over the filter unit.
  - Surface water should not be ponding on top of the unit
  - Surface water should not be infiltrating the unit components
  - Any ponding should be evaluated and determined if normal or a problem
    - Ponding above media
    - Ponding above underdrain
  - Strong anaerobic odors should not be present
  - Vegetation distribution should be even
- 2. Check distal head of laterals if accessible
- 3. Check under drain and pump basin to disposal unit

**F. All Proprietary Products:** The manufacturer has provided Operation and Maintenance instructions. These must be performed as required. (This includes Glendon® BioFilter units.)

**G. Monitoring Ports:** visually inspect for uniform distribution.

**DISINFECTION**

**H. Chlorinator / dechlorinator:** Visually inspect every 3 months to

- 1. Check chlorine tablets / liquid – fill as needed
- 2. Check if chlorine is added as designed
- 3. Record chlorine tablet / liquid use
- 4. Ensure that the unit is free of solids build-up.

**I. Ultraviolet disinfection:** Inspect every 6 months

- 1. UV lamp - replace as needed
- 2. Clean the quartz sheath at least every 6 months
- 3. Record all maintenance on the UV unit

**J. All disinfection units:** Test for Fecal Coliform bacteria every 3 months and submit results to the Department by April 15<sup>th</sup>, July 15<sup>th</sup>, October 15<sup>th</sup>, and January 15<sup>th</sup>. When results comply with standards, follow-up sampling is not required.

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1. Treatment Standard 1 systems: Results equal to or less than 200/100ml comply with the standard. Results greater than 200 indicate a problem that needs evaluation and resolution.
2. Treatment Standard 2 systems: Results equal to or less than 800/100ml comply with the standard. Results greater than 800 indicate a problem that needs evaluation and resolution.
3. Units out of compliance with the Fecal Coliform bacteria standard must be evaluated and have any problems corrected. Follow-up sampling requires weekly retests until two consecutive samples comply with the standard.

**TRANSPORT**

**K. Pumps and Pump chambers, including siphons / siphon chamber**

1. There should be no carry-over sludge / solids from septic tank.
2. Pump out chamber when septic tank is pumped OR when there is any solids build-up.
3. When effluent screen present, clean screen.
4. Check pump controls and alarm floats, if present,
5. Check for obvious signs of groundwater seeping into chamber.

**L. Timers:** Only qualified persons should service the timer. Should be checked to verify that the pump actually runs during the entire cycle.

**M. Alarms / telemetry systems:** Check all alarms/systems manually; audio and visual, to be sure they are fully operational.

**DISPOSAL**

**N. Disposal units – including drainfields, mounds, drip irrigation, etc.**

1. Evaluate the entire disposal area
  - Strong anaerobic odors should not be present
  - Look for distribution patterns indicated by plant growth – should be consistent with system design
  - No surfacing sewage should be present; all surface drainage should be diverted
  - Area should be free of deep-rooted plants
  - Check monitoring ports, if present
2. Follow manufacturer's Operation and Maintenance instructions for all units having filters, meters, and valves

**O. All systems requiring service contracts with Certified Monitoring Specialists:** The sewage system must be operated, monitored and maintained as described in the operational certificate and manufacturer's requirements.

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**3. The following best practices should be adhered to:**

- A. Protect area where sewage system is installed: no structures/impervious surfaces allowed; direct roof runoff / surface drainages away from area; no vehicle or livestock traffic which compact soil in the area; no alteration of soil by removal or grading.
- B. Protect the reserve area from damage. This is the area where a replacement sewage system may need to be installed in the future.
- C. The sewage system may only be used for household wastewater at the design flow indicated on the sewage system permit. No additional drains such as hot tubs, roof drains, or sump pumps are allowed. No additional wastes from commercial or industrial processes, cooling, roof drains, floor drains, or sump pumps are allowed.
- D. Do not flush or dispose of hazardous materials or wastes, such as solvents, pesticides and oil-based paints, in an on-site sewage system.

**4. Individuals/Firms conducting system inspections in the MRA O&M Program must meet the criteria in ONST.12.POL.833: On-Site Sewage System Inspections...**

**5. Record keeping requirements**

- A. Records of inspections, monitoring and maintenance – including pumping, cleaning filters, operation of disinfection unit, minor repairs – with date of service must be kept by owner or CMS and submitted to the Department as specified in the operational certificate.
- B. Records of monitoring, maintenance, and troubleshooting of disinfection units must be submitted quarterly to the Department.