

ACTION ITEM 8.6 – SEPTIC SYSTEM COORDINATION

ACTION ITEM

Develop written procedures to involve the County Board of Health in initial site plan review of new developments and annual water quality discussions.

OBJECTIVE

This measure allows the most suitable soils for septic system operation to be identified before the roads and lots are established to ensure the best areas for septic systems are preserved.

DESCRIPTION OF MEASURE

There are two specific opportunities for improved coordination between local governments and County Boards of Health; during the new development permitting process and while addressing local water quality challenges.

Local jurisdictions that issue building permits on lots to be served by septic systems must develop a written procedure that requires the soils inspection and health department permit process be started before any lots are laid out and any land disturbing activities are allowed. Early soil samples are especially important for new developments that will be permanently served by septic systems. The results of the soils analysis should guide the lot configuration to ensure the best soils are preserved for potential septic system locations.

Coordination can also be beneficial in identifying and addressing potential water quality challenges. An annual coordination meeting must be held each year with the County Board of Health, local governments, and the local wastewater providers to discuss water quality concerns. Failed septic systems can have a negative impact on water quality. It is important, but not required, for water quality monitoring programs to consider septic system locations and contributions when evaluating data. Water conditions assessments that include surface water quality monitoring are required in the Metro Water District's Watershed Management Plan (Management Measure 6.G.1). Investigation of possible septic system failures by the County Board of Health staff based on locally collected water quality data and the Georgia EPD 303(d) list of impaired waters is important for the protection of water quality and should be discussed at the annual coordination meeting.

The monitoring process should unfold as follows: water quality monitoring indicates an area with elevated contaminant levels and then the County Board of Health staff checks local records to determine if any septic systems are located upstream or adjacent to the monitoring station. If septic systems are present, then field investigations would be conducted to determine if one or more failed systems exist, and if any untreated wastewater is reaching the adjacent water body.

A major resource in identifying system failures is from public nuisance complaints of odors or foul water run-off. To effectively respond to customer complaints, local governments may elect to establish

Responsible Party

- Local Government
- Local Wastewater Provider
- Other: _____

In Coordination With

- Site Plan Review Staff
- Community Development/ Zoning
- Local Stormwater Program
- Local Wastewater Providers
- Local Water Provider
- County Board of Health
- Other: neighboring wastewater providers (where appropriate)

Section 8: SEPTIC SYSTEMS AND DECENTRALIZED SYSTEMS

a procedure for communicating these complaints with the County Board of Health for further investigation.

SPECIFIC SUB-TASKS

Sub-Task	Description
New development coordination	Develop written procedure that requires the soils inspection and health department permit process be started before land disturbing activities are allowed.
Water quality coordination	Coordinate local water quality challenges with the County Board of Health departments, where appropriate.