

Eastgate Environmental Health Services

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**MEMORANDUM**

Revision of June 6, 2022 memorandum. Effective July 12, 2022

**TO: KING COUNTY CERTIFIED PUMPER/HAULERS, MAINTAINERS, INSTALLERS, AND
LICENSED ON-SITE SEWAGE SYSTEM DESIGNERS**

FROM: Meagan Jackson – OSS O&M Program Supervisor

Lynn Schneider – OSS Permitting Program Supervisor

RE: OSS Repair Proposals, Permits, and Reporting

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memo is to outline a new approach to OSS repair proposals, permits, and reporting. This will serve as an **interim measure** to improving Public Health – Seattle King County (PHSKC) processes prior to the revision of King County Board of Health (KCBOH) Code Title 13. The term, "Minor Repair" is a proposed addition to Chapter 246-272A of the Washington Administrative Code (WAC). PHSKC is using this opportunity to align our terminology (Minor vs. Limited) and policies with the proposed WAC.

GOAL

To protect public health and the environment while improving business efficiencies, reducing on-site sewage system (OSS) repair costs for property owners, and improving long-term record storage and availability of OSS inspection and repair documentation.

POLICY UPDATES**I. On-site system maintainers (OSM) qualified to repair/replace a distribution box**

PHSKC authorizes certified OSMs to repair distribution boxes (d-box) and control panels, as these will be considered Minor Repairs.

KCBOH 13.08.284 On-site system maintainer. "On-site system maintainer" (or "OSM") means a qualified person approved by the health officer to conduct performance monitoring inspections of, diagnose causes of malfunction and failure of, or perform preventive maintenance on and make limited repairs to on-site sewage systems.

Previously, King County had allowed OSMs to repair/replace distribution boxes and control panels only at time of sale inspections. However, it is a benefit to the public to allow distribution boxes and control panels to be repaired by an OSM at any inspection, because this facilitates faster and more cost-effective repairs. The necessary demonstrated knowledge and skill of a certified OSM is adequate to perform the replacement of a distribution box.

II. Minor Repairs:

For a detailed list of repair categories, see OSS Repair, Reconfiguration, and Replacement Chart dated July 12, 2022 (page 5).

A repair permit is not required for Minor Repairs when the repair occurs at the septic tank or between the home and the tank or when there is a Record Drawing or Site Sketch available.

Repairs must be reported within 5 business days of the completion date of the repair work through an OnlineRME report. Report must include a complete evaluation of all system components and document any deficiencies or property conditions that may impact OSS performance.

There will be a \$29 reporting fee through OnlineRME. The reasons for this include:

- Permits are not required for Minor Repairs if an accurate site drawing showing all OSS components exists.
- Reporting a Minor Repair to PHSKC is required. Online reporting will decrease the amount of paperwork submitted to the health department, while increasing oversight and the amount of repair data received.
- Public Health inspections are typically not performed after the completion of a Minor Repair.
- Submission of an updated site sketch is usually not required; however, **a site sketch will be required in OnlineRME if the location of a component changes.**
- With OnlineRME reporting, future property owners will have documentation about the history of the OSS and we will be better able to accurately track the amount and type of repairs that have been completed.
- King County inspectors will spot-check Minor Repairs reported through OnlineRME. If a certified OSS professional is contacted regarding a Minor Repair, they will be required to provide additional information as requested or meet the inspector on site for additional follow up.

MINOR REPAIRS OF UNDOCUMENTED OSS ARE NOT ALLOWED WITHOUT A REPAIR PERMIT. IF THE LOCATION OF THE SYSTEM IN THE GROUND DOES NOT MATCH THE MOST RECENT RECORD ON FILE OR THERE IS NO DRAWING OF THE OSS ON FILE, AN UPDATED DRAWING IS REQUIRED. SITE SKETCHES CREATED DURING A TIME SALE INSPECTION ARE ACCEPTED AS ALLOWABLE DRAWINGS.

OSM or installer must submit Repair Proposal form through email to EHOSSStub@kingcounty.gov and may not conduct the repair until a repair permit is issued. If the activity will change the location of OSS components, this must be indicated on the site drawing. The fee for a Repair permit with system documentation is \$257.00. Payment will be required with submittal.

The following steps are necessary for a repair under these conditions:

1. **Full evaluation of OSS components and determination of approximate location of components.**
Each component must be viewed and inspected to determine:
 - a. The approximate location of each component
 - b. The size (i.e., volume, length, diameter, etc. as applicable to each component), material types, and construction of each component; and
 - c. The functional status and any maintenance needs of each component.
2. **Repair proposal submission.** OSM must submit repair proposal form with thorough documentation of the system evaluation and a drawing that shows the approximate location of OSS components.
3. **Health department evaluation.** An OSS Program inspector will review the repair proposal and provide a written approval or disapproval.
4. **Repair completion and documentation.** After the repair proposal has been approved, the repair may be completed. The repair must be documented in an OnlineRME report within 5 business days of the date of completion of the repair. A scaled drawing showing all system components must be submitted as part of the OnlineRME report. Report must include a complete evaluation of all

system components and document any deficiencies or property conditions that may impact OSS performance.

III. Repairs and Reconfigurations:

Repairs and Reconfigurations may only be completed by a King County certified Master Installer or a state licensed professional engineer or designer, except when allowed by the resident property owner per KCBOH 13.20.040. A repair means the relocation, replacement, or reconstruction of an OSS, or any OSS components not included in the list for a Minor Repair, which have failed and must be restored in order to return the OSS to a non-failure status. Repairs and Reconfigurations include:

- Connecting existing OSS to a detached structure (e.g., connecting a bathroom and a new out-building to an OSS)
- Tank replacements
- Rebuilding a public domain system such as a sand filter or mound per the approved design (if the Mound was designed after 2007 per the approved design). NOTE: Mounds designed prior to 2007 require substantial design alterations and require OSS Site Design application
- Replacing a proprietary treatment product
- Splitting trenches of a serial distribution system
- Replacing the drainfield piping in gravity or pressure systems
- Remediation of a drainfield

Repairs and Reconfigurations will **not** include:

- Any expansion to accommodate enlarging the OSS to add bedrooms
- A Site Design for a Gravity System replacement
- Replacing a public domain treatment unit with a proprietary treatment product
- Upgrades to support commercial facilities (e.g., adult family care, coffee shops, restaurants, gas stations, etc.),

The fee for the repair proposal is \$740.00, **which will be collected at the time of submittal**. The repair proposal will be submitted using an updated Repair Form. After the installation is complete, the final inspection report is required to be submitted to OnlineRME. This will ensure future property owners have access to the history of the OSS and final documentation of the repair. If an accurate site drawing showing all OSS components does not exist, the steps listed under the Minor Repair without site drawing section must be followed.

If the OSS is older than 50 years, does not have proof of age, or there is evidence of unpermitted septic system repairs, AND there is a sewer stub out available at the property line, PHSKC will not approve an OSS repair or reconfiguration. The property will be required to connect to sewer.

The change in procedures is based on code requirements and include:

- Repairs and Reconfigurations require a repair permit.
- Reporting a Repair or Reconfiguration to PHSKC is required.
- Public Health inspections will be required after the completion of these repairs.
- **Submission of an updated site sketch may be required at the time of application or after the job is completed.**

Oversight of Repairs and Reconfigurations will be accomplished through the repair proposal and an OnlineRME report together with an "OK to cover" inspection by the King County Health and Environmental Investigator.

IV. Permits (KCBOH 13.64.010.C)

With this interim measure, permits are not required for Minor Repairs if an accurate site drawing exists (e.g., distribution boxes or control panels), but reporting will still be required through OnlineRME.

V. Reporting requirements

All OSS evaluations must be reported according to the following timelines:

- All OSS failures must be reported through an OnlineRME report within 1 business day of discovery.
- Reports of Minor Repairs must be submitted through OnlineRME within 5 business days of completion, in accordance with Title 13.64.010.
 - **KCBOH 13.64.010 L.** For a limited [Minor] repair the installer shall submit a limited repair report to the health officer within five working days.
- OSS inspections, including routine inspections, time of sale inspections, site visits in response to complaints, and any other evaluation or monitoring of OSS performance, must be submitted within 30 days of completion, in accordance with **KCBOH 13.60.010**.
 - **KCBOH 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.

If PHSKC has evidence that an inspection or repair was conducted and not reported, the company that performed the work may be assessed a one-time penalty of no less than \$250.00.

For Repairs and Reconfigurations, the installer must notify the Health Department that a pressure test is requested and submittal of an updated Site Sketch to OnlineRME, together with the Inspection Report after the Health Department approves the installation of the repair.

- **KCBOH 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.
- Prior to backfilling a Repair, King County must be contacted to complete an installation inspection and performance test. Contact PHSKC office to schedule a pressure test.

VI. Benefits of the interim measure

The public health benefits of this approach outweigh the reduction in oversight by PHSKC for the following reasons:

- We will avoid putting the homeowners through the difficulty of researching and hiring a master installer to fix the distribution box and control panel when the maintainer is already on site and has the knowledge and experience to replace it at that time. The delay caused by notifying the Health Department ahead of time is avoided if the OSM addresses the distribution box and control panel immediately, rather than following the current strict letter of the code.
- Based on the history of time of sale maintenance inspections, OSMs have a demonstrated record of success for replacing distribution boxes and control panels.
- A decreased fee will be beneficial to homeowners allowing owners to save money.
- A history of all activity related to the OSS is stored and available to the public using OnlineRME.
- This policy aims to reduce confusion as to what is expected of the OSS industry before, during, and after performing a Minor Repair or a Repair/Reconfiguration. This allows for oversight, troubleshooting, and new approaches to preventing or delaying OSS deficiencies and failures.

King County OSS Repairs, Reconfigurations, and Replacements Chart

Repair activity	Who may perform the work			
	OSS Pumper	OSM	Master Installer	Designer/Engineer
Repairing/replacing building sewer tightline	MR	MR	MR	
Installing/replacing risers and riser lids	MR	MR	MR	
Repairing/replacing tank baffles	MR	MR	MR	
Repairing/replacing pumps*		MR	MR	
Repairing/replacing control floats*		MR	MR	
Repairing/replacing control panels and timers*		MR	MR	
Repairing/replacing any tightline (e.g. tightline between tanks, between tank and d-box, step-down piping, etc.)		DR-MR	DR-MR	
Repairing/replacing junction boxes, inspection boxes, and drainfield inspection ports		DR-MR	DR-MR	
Repairing/replacing headworks		DR-MR	DR-MR	
Repairing/replacing distribution boxes		DR-MR	DR-MR	
Repairing/replacing components of a proprietary treatment unit (e.g. aerator, filter, etc.)*		DR-MR	DR-MR	
Repairing/replacing UV disinfection units*		DR-MR	DR-MR	
Repairing/replacing less than 10 total feet of dripline**		DR-MR	DR-MR	
Jetting pressure distribution pipes and hard plastic/PVC pipes in a gravity system		DR-MR	DR-MR	
Connecting existing OSS to a detached structure			R/R	R/R
Tank replacements			R/R	R/R
Rebuilding a public domain treatment component per approved design***			R/R	R/R
Replacing a proprietary treatment unit			R/R	R/R
Replacing public domain treatment unit with proprietary treatment product			R/R	R/R
Bypassing a portion of the drainfield or splitting trenches of a serial distribution system			R/R	R/R
Replacing the piping in gravity or pressure drainfield			R/R	R/R
Expanding OSS to support additional bedrooms				R
Upgrading OSS to support commercial facilities				R
Repairing/replacing gravity drainfield				R
*Hire a licensed electrician when required, per L&I guidelines **Dripline repair/replacement is considered a minor repair ONLY when less than 10 total feet are replaced, and the issue is only broken piping. If issue is related to soil, a repair/reconfiguration is required. ***Exception: Mounds designed prior to 2007 require OSS site design application by designer.	Types of Repairs			
	MR	Minor Repair (accurate drawing not required)		
	DR-MR	Drawing Required Minor Repair (accurate drawing required)		
	R/R	Repair/Reconfiguration		
	R	Replacement		

King County OSS Repairs, Reconfigurations, and Replacements Flowchart

