

Adams County Health Department Guide to Selecting an On-site Wastewater Treatment System Installation and Service Professional

Systems Contractor-On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS)

Adams County Health Department (ACHD) licenses system contractors in Adams County. Systems contractors are responsible for installing or repairing the On-site Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) in conformance with ACHD's current OWTS Regulations and their permit issued by ACHD.

ACHD cannot recommend a system contractor; however, the following checklist should enable you to select a qualified contractor and to evaluate if they are doing a good job.

- Get cost estimates from 2-3 different contractors, in writing. Prices may vary widely between contractors.
- Compare estimates carefully. A high price does not always mean the best quality, and a price that is too low may mean the contractor is leaving something out that you will have to pay for later.
- System's Contractor's must be licensed through ACHD: Verify that the contractor has a valid ACHD systems contractor license. You can call ACHD to verify if a contractor is licensed.
- Experience Counts! Ask how long they have been installing standard & engineered On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems. You should also ask how many they install per year.
- Training: Ask whether the contractor has received any specialized training and whether he/she has applicable certifications from reputable industry organizations.
- Check references: A good contractor should be able to provide you with references.
- Contact your local Better Business Bureau to determine their rating of this contractor and if complaints have been filed.
- Check for online reviews of the contractor, but beware that sometimes reviews do not reflect the true nature of the installer's work.
- Get it in writing: It is best to have a **written contract**, to specify roles and responsibilities for you and the contractor. A contract protects you, as the owner, in case there is a dispute over the work. Make sure you understand all the terms and conditions in the contract. While many contracts are standard "boilerplate", you should consider having an attorney review the contract. Examples of terms and conditions in the contract include, but are not limited to:
 - Payment terms: Those terms should be specified in the contract and final payment should be due on completion of the installation, and health department (ACHD) approval.
 - Scope of work: A description of what is included in the work and what is excluded.
 - Insurance: Make sure the system contractor is fully insured, to include general liability and workman's comp insurance. It is recommended that you get a copy from the carrier directly!
 - Schedule: When will the system's contractor start and finish?
 - Warranty: Verify whether there is a warranty period on completed work.



- Roles and Responsibilities of the system owner and contractor: For example, do you obtain the permit, or does the system contractor? If property is damaged, who fixes it, etc.
- Permits: In addition to the ACHD permit there may be other permits required, e.g. electrical permit. Who is responsible to obtain the permits?

Systems Cleaner - Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS)

Adams County Health Department (ACHD) licenses systems cleaners in Adams County. Systems cleaners are responsible for cleaning septic tanks by removing the sewage and disposing of the collected sewage at approved sites in conformance with TCHD's OWTS Regulation.

ACHD cannot recommend a system cleaner; however, the following checklist will enable you to select a qualified system cleaner and to evaluate if they are doing a good job.

- Know your system and keep records. ACHD's "Your Septic System Guidelines and Records" is available in "hard copy". It is a good source of basic information on your system. ACHD keeps records on file of most systems, including system diagrams.
- Cost Estimates: Three estimates are recommended, as prices may vary widely between contractors. Costs are typically based on the size of the septic tank(s).
- License: Make sure the systems cleaner has a valid system's cleaner license from ACHD.
- Experience: Ask how long they have been cleaning septic tanks and how many tanks they pump per year.
- Training: Ask whether the cleaner has received any specialized training and whether he/she has applicable certifications from reputable organizations.
- Check references: A good systems cleaner should be able to provide you with references.
- Get it in writing: Ask for a pump receipt that includes the following basic information:
 - Location pumped
 - Amount pumped
 - Service date
 - Condition of tank, tees or baffles
- Is the systems cleaner fully licensed and insured?
- Inspections: Unlike system installations, there is no independent verification that all tank(s) and compartments were adequately pumped. To verify adequate pumping, you should consider being onsite when the pumping is being done.
- Additives: Many system cleaners recommend and sell additives. ACHD does not recommend any additives.
- Disposal of Sewage: Ask the system cleaner where they dispose of the sewage. ACHD requires that they dispose only at approved sites or facilities. The systems cleaner should be able to provide you with a contact with the facility. A call to the facility is recommended to verify that the system cleaner is in good standing.
- Contact your local Better Business Bureau to determine their rating of this contractor and if complaints have been filed