



## ADAMS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

*Together for a Healthier Adams County*

### ON-SITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM USE PERMIT PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Adams County Health Department (ACHD) has a Use Permit Program that applies to all On-site Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) within its jurisdiction of Adams County. **A use permit is not required for existing homeowners until one of the circumstances described below in question 3 occurs.** The following questions and answers are intended to provide you with information about the program. If you have questions or comments, please contact the ACHD office:

7190 Colorado Blvd., Ste. 200  
South Platte Crossing Building  
Commerce City, CO 80022  
Phone: 303-288-6816  
Email: [chwaterprogram@adamscountyco.gov](mailto:chwaterprogram@adamscountyco.gov)

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## **1. Why does ACHD have a Use Permit Program?**

A Use Permit Program accomplishes the following:

- Identifies OWTS that were never permitted and establishes a record for those systems
- Identifies failing or malfunctioning OWTS
- Discovers problems that may be repaired in order to prevent larger problems or failures
- Clarifies what specific circumstances will require that an OWTS be inspected
- Assures trained and certified inspectors do the inspections
- Establishes uniform inspection criteria and requirements

## **2. What is a “Use Permit”?**

A “Use Permit” expressly authorizes the use of an OWTS. It recognizes that the owner of an OWTS is responsible for proper use and maintenance of the OWTS.

## **3. What circumstances will require me to obtain or renew my “Use Permit”?**

- The sale of the property (as more fully defined in Section 4.3 of ACHD OWTS Regulation O-26)
- Change in use of the property (e.g., from residential to commercial, or from one type of commercial use to another type of commercial use)
- A remodel that includes any additional flow to the septic system (including the addition of bedrooms)
  - If the proposed flow for the system exceeds what the system was originally designed for, a system expansion or replacement is required. System expansions and replacements require a permit from ACHD that is separate from the use permit. If a system is replaced entirely, a use permit is not required.
- Connection of a modular unit or mobile home to the system
- Other conditions that the Department may deem appropriate

#### **4. Who is required to obtain a “Use Permit”?**

In cases where the home is being sold or changing ownership, the owner or seller of the home will be required to obtain the “Use Permit”. In all other cases, the current owner of the property will be required to obtain the “Use Permit”.

#### **5. How do I obtain a “Use Permit”?**

- Have the OWTS inspected by a [National Association of Wastewater Technicians \(NAWT\) Certified Use Permit Inspector](#). These inspectors are independent and do not work for ACHD.
- Have the inspector complete the ACHD “Use Permit Inspection” form.
- Repair any deficient items found during the inspection; provide verification that those repairs were made.
- Submit an “Application for a Use Permit” to ACHD, pay the permit fee, and provide a copy of the complete inspection report.

#### **6. Who does the inspection and what does the inspector look for?**

An approved and certified “third party” inspector will do the inspection. That inspector will check the septic tank, electrical connections, controls and pumps (if the OWTS has these), and the soil treatment area (leach field). The inspector will need to inspect all items listed on the Adams County Health Department Use Permit Inspection Form and answer whether or not they are acceptable.

#### **7. What if the inspector finds problems with the OWTS?**

All deficiencies with the OWTS found by the inspector will need to be repaired before ACHD can issue a use permit. Examples of these include but are not limited to electrical connections that don’t meet code, damaged septic tank lids, pump not working, risers and lids below grade, etc. You will need to provide a completed Use Permit Deficiency Repair Verification Form to confirm that these repairs have been completed.

**8. What does a “Use Permit” cost?**

Please see the most current version of our fee schedule.

**9. When did the requirement for a Use Permit begin?**

Use Permits are required beginning July 1, 2011.

**10. How do I find a certified inspector?**

Visit the [NAWT](#) website to search for inspectors.

**11. Who can apply for a “Use Permit”?**

The owner, seller, use permit inspector, or real estate agent may submit an application.

**12. How do I find out information about my OWTS?**

If the OWTS was originally permitted by ACHD, the record can be obtained from ACHD by calling our office.

**13. What if the inspector discovers the OWTS is malfunctioning?**

If the OWTS is malfunctioning (typically with surfacing sewage), the owner of the property will be required to obtain a repair permit from ACHD and repair the OWTS. Alternatively, if the owner chooses to replace the septic system entirely, a permit to install they system will be required from ACHD.

**14. What if the OWTS is malfunctioning and the owner is not able to obtain a repair permit and complete the repairs before the sale of a home?**

ACHD will issue a conditional use permit if the purchaser completes and submits an “Agreement to Repair” form to ACHD, and the form is approved by ACHD. This form must be notarized. The “Agreement to Repair” will require that the purchaser obtain a repair permit and complete the repair within a specified amount of time.

**15. What are the next steps after I submit an application for a Use Permit?**

Once you submit a completed application and inspection report, and the fee is paid, ACHD staff will review the application and report. If the application and inspection report are complete, ACHD will issue a Use Permit. Typically, the turnaround time will be no more than 5 business days, assuming no repairs to the system are needed. If the inspection report indicates that there are deficiencies with the OWTS that have not been repaired, ACHD will notify you of what needs to be done in order for ACHD to approve the application. Once those issue(s) are resolved, ACHD will issue a Use Permit.

**16. How long is a Use Permit valid for?**

A Use Permit for a sale is valid until the date of real estate closing or for a period of twelve months, whichever comes first. Once the property has sold, or the use permit has been issued for another triggering event (as outlined in question 3 above), another use permit is not required until another triggering event occurs.

**17. Where can I find information about the Use Permit program, including the forms?**

More information, including the necessary forms, have been posted on the [ACHD Septic Systems webpage](#).