

# Operation & Maintenance Program



Presented by:  
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*Geauga Public Health is dedicated to improving public health by monitoring, educating, and promoting community and public health services in a sustainable way in Geauga County.*

# Ohio Law & Regulations

- ▶ In 2015, new guidance was implemented requiring health departments to establish an operation and maintenance permitting program for sewage treatment systems. The purpose of the revision is to ensure that systems are being maintained properly, not causing a public health nuisance and to help educate homeowners.
- ▶ Ohio Administrative Code 3701-29-19
  - ▶ *“The board of health shall develop a program for the administration of O&M management for STS and GWRS and system owner education in compliance with division (A)(7) of section 3718.02 of the Revised Code and this chapter.”*
- ▶ Ohio Administrative Code 3701-29-09(I)
  - ▶ *No person shall operate a STS or a type 2, 3 or 4 GWRS without an approved and valid operation permit from the board of health. The owner and/or a responsible management entity when applicable, shall comply with the terms and condition of the permit.*

# Importance

- ▶ Different types of systems require specialized maintenance that may get neglected by homeowners.
- ▶ Neglecting maintenance of these systems can cause them to fail sooner, cause a public health nuisance, and possibly contaminate ground water.
  - ▶ Berkshire Estates
  - ▶ Richey Road
- ▶ The goal is to ensure every homeowner has the resources and knowledge to properly maintain their septic system

# Fees

- ▶ This is an unfunded program mandated by the Ohio Department of Health. The fees collected will be used to pay for the anticipated costs of issuing permits, providing educational material, and the time to communicate with the community.
- ▶ Geauga proposed fees:
  - ▶ NPDES \$150/year
  - ▶ Non-NPDES \$100 5-years
- ▶ Fees for surrounding counties:
  - ▶ Lake
    - ▶ NPDES \$160/year
    - ▶ Non-NPDES \$100 5-years
  - ▶ Cuyahoga
    - ▶ NPDES \$205/year
    - ▶ Non-NPDES \$85/year
  - ▶ Portage
    - ▶ NPDES \$100 for systems requiring yearly sampling
    - ▶ Non-NPDES \$50/year

# Geauga Public Health O&M Program

- ▶ We are currently in the planning stages of our O&M program.
- ▶ 2023 focus will be on NPDES systems
  - ▶ These systems are legally required to have yearly sampling. Current Geauga compliance rate for 2022 is less than 10%.
  - ▶ Failure to maintain these systems will have a direct impact on Geauga County water quality.
- ▶ Homeowners will be required to pay the permit fee for their type of system, have their system inspected by a registered service provider and sampling as required by type of system.

# Frequently Asked Questions

- ▶ Who will have to be apart of the O&M program?
  - ▶ Every household in Geauga county that is not connected to sanitary sewer will be enrolled into the Geauga Public Health O&M program.
- ▶ Why do I have to get a permit?
  - ▶ In 2015, the Ohio Department of Health updated rules concerning the operation and maintenance of household sewage treatment systems. All counties are required to have an O&M permitting program in place for all household sewage treatment systems.
- ▶ When will I be required to have my septic inspected?
  - ▶ We expect to have all systems enrolled over the next 5-10 years.
- ▶ Will you make me replace my system?
  - ▶ Homeowners will always have the option to repair their system if it is causing a public health nuisance. It is important to understand that in some cases, repairs will not be enough to remedy the issues so a replacement will be needed.
- ▶ Where will my money go?
  - ▶ This is an unfunded, mandatory program so the money will go towards operational costs. Fees will be reassessed on a yearly basis.

# For Sale of Property Program

- ▶ This will still be an offered program on a voluntary basis.

# Common Myths

- ▶ My system is \_\_\_\_ years old and works fine.
  - ▶ Just like our cars, all septic systems are going to fail without proper maintenance.
- ▶ I have a new system, I don't ever have to touch it.
  - ▶ All systems need maintained: cleaning the effluent filter, rotating the in-use field, changing an elbow, having the tank pumped, etc.
- ▶ You just want me to put in a new system.
  - ▶ We want to help educate homeowners on the proper maintenance so that their system doesn't fail after a few years. Proper maintenance will extend the life of your system.
- ▶ You just want to charge the taxpayers more money.
  - ▶ This is a mandated and unfunded program by the state, the fees are used to cover operational costs.



# Questions?

Please contact Dan Lark with any additional questions

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