

# Septic system inspections in wellhead protection areas

*If you have a septic system, and you are located within 100 metres of a municipal well, or you are in the most vulnerable part of the municipal well's two-year time-of-travel area, your septic system may be assessed as a significant threat to municipal drinking water sources.*

*If so, your septic will need to be inspected through a program beginning in spring of 2015.*

## Mandatory septic inspections

Changes have been made to the Ontario Building Code through *Ontario Regulation 315/10*. These changes require mandatory "on-site sewage system" (septic system) inspections. These amendments support the *Ontario Clean Water Act, 2006*.

## Clean Water Act, 2006

The *Clean Water Act* identifies sewage storage, including septic systems, as one of 21 activities that can pose a significant threat to drinking water. The Building Code was amended in response.

The Ontario Building Code requires septic inspection programs to identify systems that aren't being properly maintained, and that therefore pose a threat to public health.

## Why focus on septic systems?

Septic systems, when properly designed, constructed and maintained, effectively reduce or eliminate most human health or environmental threats posed by pollutants in household wastewater. However, septic systems do require regular maintenance and they can fail.

Failed systems pose a serious public health risk and can contaminate surrounding ground and water, and enter drinking water systems far beyond the property boundaries. There is significant potential to cause serious illness and even death.

*This table answers some common questions about mandatory septic inspections:*

Are all septic systems subject to the inspection requirements?	No, only those septic systems located in vulnerable areas, where they have a vulnerability score of 10 – which identifies them as potential significant threats. Mapping of vulnerable areas is available at <a href="http://www.sourcewaterinfo.on.ca">www.sourcewaterinfo.on.ca</a>
How can I find out if my septic system will require a mandatory inspection?	Your municipality or health unit (if they have been contracted by the municipality) will be contacting you.
What are the timelines?	The first phase of septic inspections begins in spring of 2015. Talk to your municipality or health unit about having your septic system inspected.
Who will be doing the inspections?	Municipalities may choose to have members of their building inspection staff do them or they may contract the health unit.
What does a septic inspection entail?	It is up to each municipality to determine how they will conduct their inspections. Contact your local municipality (or health unit if they have been contracted by your municipality) for full details.
Is there a fee?	It is up to each municipality how they choose to recover their costs from the landowner. Talk to your municipality or health unit to find out if there is a cost for your septic inspection.

Changes to the Ontario Building Code ensure that septic systems, close to sources of municipal drinking water, are inspected.

Mandatory inspection of these septic systems begins in the spring of 2015 in this region.

Please see the rest of the questions and answers on next page ...

## Mandatory Septic Inspections – Questions and Answers

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What information do I need to have for my inspection?	You should know what type of system(s) you have, determine the age of the system if possible, know the location of the system, and have any inspection reports from pump-outs, and any actions taken to remediate failed systems.
What happens after my inspection?	All septic systems subject to mandatory inspections will be re-inspected at least every five years.
If the septic is a tertiary system that gets inspected annually does it still require the mandatory inspection?	A treatment unit is serviced and tested yearly as per maintenance agreements. However, mandatory inspection is still required for the entire septic system including the leaching bed.
What about holding tanks?	Tanks are pumped on a regular basis as required and a pump report will be needed to verify that the tank is in good working condition.
Where do I find a qualified pumper?	You may look on a municipal website, yellow pages, or referrals. Pumpers are regulated through Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.
After the inspection, if the system is failing, what do I do?	Contact a qualified installer for repair or replacement of the system. Non-compliance will result in an order being issued and possible legal action.
What if I have no idea where the septic system is and there are no records?	Retain the services of a qualified installer or professional person to locate and assess the condition of the system. The report will need to be provided to the municipality.

<b>Municipalities in the Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Source Protection Region where septic systems may be assessed as a significant drinking water threat*</b>	<b>Authority Conducting Inspections</b>	<b>Anticipated Start Date</b>
<b>Bruce County:</b>		
Township of Huron-Kinloss	Municipality	Underway
<b>Huron County:</b>		
Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh	Huron County Health Unit	Spring 2015
Municipality of Bluewater	Municipality	Spring 2015
Municipality of Central Huron	Huron County Health Unit	Spring 2015
Municipality of Huron East	Huron County Health Unit	Spring 2015
Municipality of Morris-Turnberry	Municipality	Spring 2015
Township of North Huron*	Huron County Health Unit	Spring 2015
<b>Perth County:</b>		
Municipality of North Perth	Municipality	Spring 2015
<b>Wellington County:</b>		
Town of Minto*	Municipality	Spring 2015

\* NOTE: In the Town of Minto and Township of North Huron, there are currently no septic systems in the region assessed as significant threats to drinking water.



Ausable Bayfield  
Maitland Valley  
Source Protection  
Region

Ausable Bayfield Maitland Valley Drinking Water Source Protection Region  
c/o 71108 Morrison Line, RR 3 Exeter, ON N0M 1S5  
**sourcewaterinfo.on.ca**  
Maitland Valley Source Protection Area: 519-335-3557  
Ausable Bayfield Source Protection Area: 519-235-2610  
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*Created for local information purposes • March 2015 • Subject to change • For legislation and regulations visit ontario.ca.*