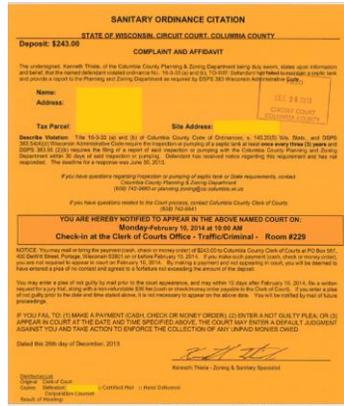


If maintenance is not reported by the final deadline the County will issue citations to the property owner. Citations are sent November through January with court dates scheduled December through March. The County is not trying to have a property owner maintain their POWTS in the middle of winter nor needlessly spend property owner's money. The County is simply attempting to enforce the ordinance as it is written.



WHAT YOU SHOULD EXPECT FROM YOUR SERVICE PROVIDER!

If your tank is greater than 1/3 full of sludge and scum it will be pumped. If there is a filter in the septic tank it should be cleaned at this time. The service provider should ensure that baffles are in place and that there is no septage ponding to the ground surface.

You should expect timely and accurate reporting of maintenance. State Statute, Wisconsin Administrative Code and Columbia County Title 16-320-010 (B) requires that your service provider report maintenance to Columbia County within 30 days of Service. Columbia County has set up a web site for service providers to report maintenance.

Your service provider reports maintenance to the County by either the property address or parcel number. This is why it is important that you provide the correct property address or parcel number to your service provider.

Resources:
Care and maintenance of residential septic systems B3583, 2006. Retrieved from UW Extension

Maintaining your septic system. Pipeline, Fall 2004 Vol. 15, No. 4 pp 1-2. Retrieved from National Environmental Service Center. Retrieved from <http://www.nesc.wvu.edu/subpages/septic.cfm>

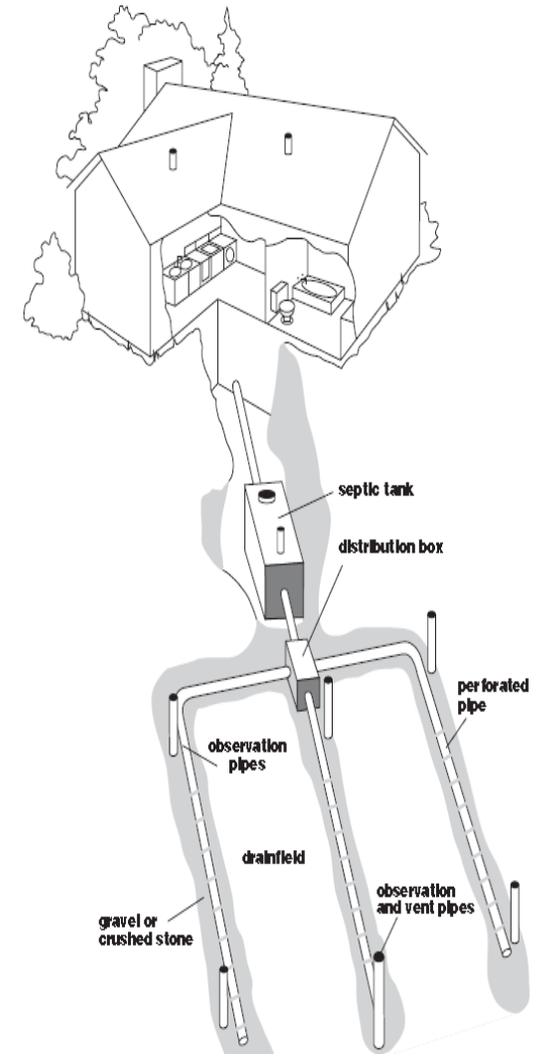
Title 16-300 of the Columbia County Code of Ordinances

WAC SPS 383

WI Statutes 145.20

Columbia County
Planning & Zoning
112 E. Edgewater St.
Portage, WI 53901
(608) 742-9660

COLUMBIA COUNTY

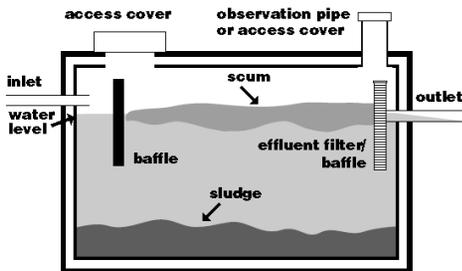


POWTS MAINTENANCE

WHAT IS A PRIVATE ON-SITE WASTE TREATMENT SYSTEM (POWTS)

Private On-Site Sewage Systems are more commonly known as septic systems. System types include in-ground trench or bed, in-ground pressure, at-grade, and mound type systems. The first portion of a septic system is the anaerobic treatment tank. This tank is where sludge and scum settle out. If your system was installed after 2001 there will be a filter in the tank to keep particles larger than 1/8" diameter from making it to your drainfield. In-ground pressure, at grade and mound type systems all have pumps. You don't want to be putting food waste, feminine hygiene products, or flushable baby wipes into your system. These items could cause the filter to plug, plug the drainfield or ruin the pump. The drainfield is the second portion of the septic system. This is where the treatment portion occurs. The state of Wisconsin requires three feet of separation between the bottom of your drainfield and the limiting factor (water table, impermeable soils, bedrock). This is why mound systems and at-grade systems exist, to meet the 3' separation requirement.

Holding tanks are also considered a POWTS. Holding tanks must be pumped once the liquid level reaches 1' below the inlet invert or at 90% of the tank volume.



WHY IS MAINTENANCE IMPORTANT?

1. MONEY! Failing septic systems are expensive to repair or replace, and improper maintenance by homeowners is a common cause of early system failure. There is a small cost for preventative maintenance compared to a potential large cost for system replacement.

MONEY continued...

The replacement of a failing septic system can cost thousands of dollars. Compare that to spending a couple hundred dollars every three years to have your septic system routinely pumped and inspected. Proper maintenance may even extend the life of your system.

2. HEALTH! You should be concerned about the health of your family, your community, and the environment. When septic systems fail, inadequately treated household wastewater is released into the environment. Any contact with untreated human waste can pose a significant risk to public health. Untreated wastewater from failing septic systems can contaminate nearby wells, groundwater, and drinking water sources.

3. It's the LAW! Wisconsin Statute 145.20 and Wisconsin Administrative Code SPS 383.54 requires Columbia County to establish a maintenance program for all POWTS installed in the County. POWTS maintenance is regulated under Title 16-320-020 of the Columbia Code of Ordinance and states: Title 16-320-020 (B) The owner of the property served by the POWTS and those licensed to service a POWTS are hereby required to comply with the following maintenance program. (1) All septic tanks shall be visually inspected and pumped within three years of the date of installation or inclusion into the POWTS maintenance program and at least once every three years thereafter, unless upon inspection the tank is found to have less than 1/3 of the volume occupied by sludge and scum.

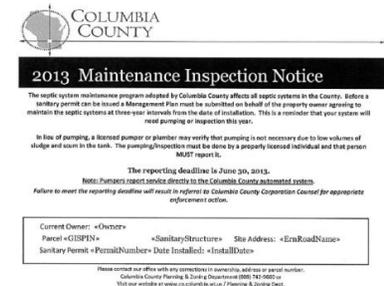
(2) Pumping of a septic tank shall be done by a certified septage servicing operator in accordance with State Statutes, Administrative Code and this Ordinance. (3) Visual inspection of a private sewage system to determine the condition of the tank and whether wastewater or effluent from the POWTS is ponding on the ground surface shall be performed by one of the following service providers: (a) A licensed master plumber (b) A licensed master plumber-restricted service (c) A certified POWTS inspector (d) A certified septage servicing operator under State Statutes or Administrative Code (e) A registered POWTS maintainer.

WHAT THE COUNTY PROVIDES TO YOU!

You may check on your maintenance status by contacting the Planning and Zoning office, or going on-line to the following website:

<http://ascent.co.columbia.wi.us/LandRecords/PropertyListing/RealEstateTaxParcel>. Search your property either by name, address or parcel number. Select your property by clicking on the red number under the heading Parcel. In the center of the page will be a drop down menu that states SELECT DETAIL. Chose PERMITS from this menu, which will list your current sanitary permit, date of installation, and date of last maintenance or pumping.

For property owners that have not pumped or maintained their systems in the last three (3) years the County sends out reminders that maintenance is due. The reminders have deadlines printed on them. First reminders are sent in March/April with deadlines in June and July.



If the County does not receive notification of maintenance from a property owner by the deadline of the first notice, a final notice is sent. Final Notices are sent in July/August with deadlines in September/October.

