



COUNTY OF COLUSA

PLANNING, BUILDING, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, AND WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION

146 7th Street
Colusa, California 95932
TELEPHONE (530) 458-0480 FAX (530) 458-0482

Summary of Proposed Local OWTS Standards Compared to the State's Minimum Standards

State Minimum Standards	Local Alternative Standards	Difference
No local permits for systems >3,500 gallons per day	Local permits can be issued up to 10,000 gallons per day	Allows local permits for projects with 6,500 gallons per day more than the State's standard.
Requires a OWTS to be designed by a licensed professional engineer.	Only alternative OWTS or systems located in marginal soils (>60 MPI) have to be designed by a licensed professional engineer	Provides additional flexibility on who can design an OWTS an owner can hire workers directly to have the work done as an owner/builder.
In systems designs there is only one option: Standard septic tank and gravity leach field .	The local regulations include multiple options: Including standard and alternative designs to match soil, groundwater and other site constraints, consistent with industry standards and practices in neighboring counties.	Local standards implement additional flexibility at the local level.
The State requires 5-ft to 20-ft soil depth below the trench bottom based on percolation rate.	The local regulations use a 5-ft to soil depth for standard systems and 2-ft to 3-ft allowed for alternative designs.	Local standards implement additional flexibility at the local level.
Soil profile excavations for each OWTS location of new parcels.	Allows the Director to waive this requirement when the availability of information demonstrates conformance with applicable siting criteria for future OWTS.	Allows the waiver of pre-lotting excavations.
The State's leach field sizing is limited to a standard trench, 4 sq. ft. per lineal foot of trench.	Local regulations allow up to 8 sq. ft. per lineal ft. of trench for standard systems, and alternate sizing methods for alternative systems (such as drip dispersal) per industry standards.	The local standards generally allow a greater gallons per day/sq.ft. in determining design.



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Wastewater application rates, vary between 1.2 and 0.1 gallons per day/sq.ft. in determining system design.	Wastewater application rates, vary between 1.2 and 0.2 gallons per day/sq.ft. in determining system design.	The local standards generally allow a greater gallons per day/sq.ft. in determining design.
State requires 5-ft to 20-ft of groundwater separation below trench bottom, depending on percolation rate	Local regulations uses 5 ft. to 20 ft. for standard systems with 2 ft. to 5 ft. allowed for alternative designs (pressure distribution, mounds, at-grade, shallow drip dispersal, advanced treatment units)	The local standards generally allow a greater gallons per day/sq.ft. in determining design.
Minimum depth to groundwater with a percolation rate of 5 to 30 minutes per inch is 8 feet.	Minimum depth to groundwater with a percolation rate of 5 to 30 minutes per inch is 5 feet.	Can be 3 feet closer to groundwater.
Natural ground slope in all areas used for effluent disposal shall not be greater than 25 percent.	Maximum ground slope 30 percent, plus there are additional options for steeper slopes with supporting analysis engineering.	Provides additional flexibility for the siting of drip dispersal systems.
Setback from vernal pools, wetlands, stock ponds and similar water bodies is 200 feet.	Setback from these types of water features is 100 feet.	Provides a more reasonable and justifiable setback of 100 feet from these types of water
Complex design soil application rate tables with 20 different soil and subsoil types.	Simplified soil loading rate table with 7 soil types.	Improved understanding of the requirements and simplify the implementation of the
Numerous regulations have been detailed with respect to OWTS near impaired water bodies.	No impaired water bodies have been identified in Colusa County so no regulations have been developed for impaired water bodies.	Simplify and minimize the regulations as best as possible.
For chamber leach fields there are no sizing credit for leach field reduction.	In local regulations there is a 30% reduction in leach field sizing (per California Plumbing Code).	Local standards implement additional flexibility at the local level.



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Minimum residential septic tank size based on Table H.2.1 of the plumbing code.	Minimum residential septic tank size has been set at 120 gallons/day for the first three bedrooms plus 60 gallons/day for each additional bedroom.	Residential septic tank size is approximately 30 percent less than required under the plumbing code.
Minimum non-residential septic tank size based on Table H.2.1 of the plumbing code which contains a standard formula.	Provides for the use flow equalization for facilities that experience regular and predictable fluctuations in wastewater flows.	Provides for additional flexibility in the design to prevent over building a system.
The State standards do not have design modifications for drainage or flooding issues.	The local regulations have guidelines and criteria provided for, curtain drains (sub-drains), soil fill, and flood area mitigations.	Local standards implement additional flexibility at the local level.
State Tier 1 Standards do not contain a variance process for deviations from standards.	The County's LAMP does contain a variance process and where OWTS do not meet horizontal separation requirements, the County can allowed deviation based on the standard of "meeting to the greatest extent practicable".	Provides additional flexibility over the State's minimum standards.
For home additions and remodeling projects, the State standards require these projects be treated the same as new construction.	The County's LAMP guidelines provide standardized methods and criteria for evaluating operating conditions of existing OWTS in connection with house additions, remodeling projects, etc	The implementation of this local standard provides greater flexibility than the State standard.
For system repairs, the State requires meeting the code to greatest extent practicable. However, only standard systems may be authorized by County and RWQCB approval is mandated for any non-standard repair option.	The County's LAMP also specifies that the repair must meet the standards to the greatest extent practicable. However, multiple design options which are suited to site constraints may be authorized by County.	The implementation of this local standard provides greater flexibility than the State standard.



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The State standards do not address compatibility with neighboring county standards.	The County's LAMP standards are designed to be compatible (not always identical) with neighboring Counties where greater amount of OWTS development activity occurs, including: • System design approach and sizing factors • Terminology and construction practices • Recognition of qualifications for septic system maintenance contractors in neighboring Counties • Dependence on septage hauling contractors and receiving facilities in neighboring counties	The local standards provide better coordination with adjacent counties standards.
The State has no variance of design options for setbacks from public water wells and intakes unless approved directly from the RWQCB.	The local regulations specify "Meet setback requirements to greatest extent practicable" and there are other design options for site-specific conditions.	Local standards implement additional flexibility at the local level.