

Town of North Andover Health Department – Guide to the Septic Installation Process

How to go from a Title 5 inspection to repairing or replacing a septic system:

If you need a Septic System Inspection done, you need to hire a licensed Title 5 Inspector. **Title 5 Inspectors are licensed by the state of Massachusetts and also permitted to work in the Town of North Andover.** A list of current inspectors can be found at www.northandoverma.gov, Health Department section.

The Inspector will perform their assessment and then submit the Septic System Inspection report to the Health Department within 30 days with a check made out to the Town of North Andover in the amount of \$50.00. The result will be either “Pass”, “Fail”, or “Conditional Pass”.

In the event that you have a Title 5 Inspection done and you receive a **Pass**, there is no further action required of you at this time. The report will be submitted to the Health Department office within 30 days of completion and will become public record.

In the event that you have a Title 5 Inspection done and you receive a **Conditional Pass** (which means the system will pass if a specific item is repaired) the following steps must be followed:

- The homeowner hires a Septic Disposal Works Installer (SDWI) permitted by the Town of North Andover. The list of SDWI's is posted on the Town of North Andover website in the Health Department section or is available at the Health Department office. NOTE: If the Inspector is also a permitted septic installer in North Andover, he or she can perform the installation provided he gives the homeowner a full list of installers permitted in North Andover.
- The hired installer submits an application with a fee of \$175 for a component replacement/repair and the application is reviewed and a permit is generated. The installer is notified by phone that the permit is ready for pickup. If you only need a component repair, such as a pipe or a tank, design plans generally do not need to be submitted, except in the case where placement is different. If plans are needed see **Design Plans** below.

In the event that you have a Title 5 Inspection done, and you receive a **Failing** status report, the following steps must be followed:

Soil Testing

- An application to schedule soil and percolation testing must be completed by an engineer, sanitarian or soil evaluator that you hire, and a fee of **\$440** (or \$585 for undeveloped lots) must be attached, made payable to the Town of North Andover.

- A request is then sent to the Town's septic consultant to schedule soil and percolation testing. The soil testing usually takes place within two weeks.
- The consultant notifies the soil evaluator when the testing will take place.
- Soil testing is completed and results are sent to the Health Department and engineer.

Design Plans

- The homeowner hires an engineer or sanitarian to design a septic system and produce a plan reflecting the placement of the system and all pertinent information.
- The septic plan is submitted to the Health Department with an application and a fee of **\$275.00**. This fee includes the original review as well as a re-review. If an additional review is needed, there is a \$125 plan resubmittal fee. Plans will be sent by mail for review, however if the engineer or sanitarian has provided the Health Department with a PDF copy of the plan, the accompanying paperwork and the PDF are emailed that day to our Septic Consultant.
- The Health Department strives to complete reviews of design plans within three weeks' time. Maximum time allowed is 45 days though this is rarely needed.
- Once reviewed, an approval or disapproval letter is generated and sent to the homeowner and engineer or sanitarian. If approved, the homeowner can hire an installer to build the approved septic system as described below. If disapproved, the engineer or sanitarian must address the missing or deficient criteria, and submit a revised plan for re-review.
- If site constraints are such that the plan cannot comply with the standards in the regulations and requires a variance request from those standards to be reviewed, the engineer or sanitarian will note that on the plan and make a request in writing to be present at an upcoming meeting of the North Andover Board of Health. Once the plan is substantially approvable it will be placed on the next available monthly BOH meeting.
- Some septic system projects will require review and approval from other Town departments or boards in addition to the Health Department and Board of Health. If needed this is usually from the Conservation Commission if the work is proposed in their jurisdiction. You can learn more about this from your engineer or sanitarian or the Conservation Commission office.

Repair/Replacement

- The homeowner must hire a Septic Disposal Works Installer permitted by the Town of North Andover. The list of SDWI's is posted on the Town's website or paper copies are available at the Health Department office.

- The hired installer submits an application with a fee of **\$350** (\$175 for work on an individual component only) and the application is reviewed and a permit is generated. The permit, and a copy of the septic plan approval letter are stapled to the approved stamped plans, and the installer is notified by phone that the plan and permit are ready for pickup.
- The installer will have a pre-construction meeting with Health Department Staff to review site-specific issues.
- The installer might need to acquire additional permits for work depending on what is proposed to be built at your property. These might include electrical permits for any pumps or alarms, building permits for certain walls, or trench permits for excavation. Your installer should be able to guide you through the permits needed, as can the various Town Department who might be involved.
- The installer will have their work overseen by Health Department staff and/or the Town's outside consultant. Here is a summary of the inspection process:

Tank hole inspection – Installer shall request inspection to confirm the location of the excavation and to show a minimum of 6 inches of stone on the bottom of the tank hole. Also confirmed will be the tank's distance to the building and its orientation to the system.

Bottom of Bed (BOB) – (if there is a retaining wall it should be done first) The installer shall inform the Health Dept. of the proposed timing of installation. The installer must request the inspection of the BOB, but does not have to be present. Inspector will respond in a reasonable time. Excavation should be complete and if needed for the installation, 1 load of septic sand shall be available on site for observation. Multiple inspections may incur a re-inspection fee of \$75 if the installer puts in a request and the site is found not ready.

Final Inspection – The design engineer or sanitarian will first complete an inspection of the system to confirm compliance with the approved plans and the various regulations. The engineer or sanitarian will call or email the Health Department upon their satisfactory assessment of the construction, after which the installer calls to set up an inspection time for the health department or their outside consultant to perform a final inspection. The licensed installer must be present for this inspection. With a pump system, a permit must be acquired through the Building Department. All electrical work must be ready and able to cause the pump to work and alarm to function. The Town will contact the consultant, who will in turn contact the installer.

Final Grade – Installer must request an inspection when all grading is complete. This includes loam and seeding of the septic areas. The installer does not have to be on site. Note that the Final Grade inspection cannot be completed when the system is covered in snow. If the homeowner does not want seeding to be placed on top of the septic system at the time of final grade inspection, they may submit in writing their wishes to waive this requirement.

Almost There!

- Once the inspection process is complete, a **Certification of Installation Form** needs to be submitted, signed and dated by the engineer or sanitarian, and the installer. This document certifies that the installation was completed per the plan and regulations.
- In addition, an **As-Built Plan**, which is the final plan of the septic system, must be submitted with the certification form.
- Once the above items are received, a **Certificate of Compliance** is issued by the **Health Department to the property owner.**
- The process is now complete. We appreciate your understanding of the time and various processes involved. At the end, we hope you will agree that the Town of North Andover, you as a resident, and our mutual environment are all being bettered by you undertaking the above steps. If you have any questions about these matters please do not hesitate to contact the health department at 978-688-9540 or healthdept@northandoverma.gov