

## RMOW guideline for property owners and contractors regarding Onsite Wastewater System Decommissioning.

The British Columbia Ministry of Health “Sewerage System Standard Practice Manual, Version 3, 2014” requires property owners properly decommissioning on-site wastewater systems when the use of such a system is discontinued due to the connection to a public sewer system. Proper decommissioning or removal procedures must be followed to ensure that human health and the environment are protected. Septic tanks and holding tanks must be properly decommissioned to prevent future safety hazards due to unsecured tank openings or from tank collapse. Property owners may choose to remove other components of the system for practical or esthetic reasons. This information provides guidance for disposal of a septic tank, holding tank or a disposal field from an abandoned individual onsite wastewater system.

Persons involved in decommissioning onsite wastewater systems should wear personal protective gear and employ occupational safety precautions to reduce the health or safety risks.

The British Columbia Ministry of Health “Sewerage System Standard Practice Manual, Version 3, 2014” states:

### III- 6.4.4 TANK ABANDONMENT

When a septic tank or other subsurface treatment tank is abandoned one of the following procedures should be taken in order to prevent future health and safety hazards:

- The contents of the tank should be pumped out and the tank, if structurally sound, should be filled with inorganic material such as soil or rock; **or**,
- The tank should be removed or broken up, and the resulting excavation should be filled with soil or rock. Filling the tank will prevent caving in, collapse and floatation. Organic materials should not to be used for this purpose as they can decay; possibly leading to caving in or collapse and can produce toxic and possibly explosive gases.

An out-of-service septic tank or holding tank must be decommissioned in accordance with the regulation and this guideline. An out-of-service disposal field may be left in place. However, if disposal field removal is selected the property owner should engage an environmental consultant to ensure the removal process is completed in a manner that does not create a health or environmental hazard.

### Decommissioning Procedures for Septic Tanks and Holding Tanks:

Septic tank / holding tank decommissioning **must be completed within 120 days** following connection to a public sewer system, septic tank and disposal field replacement or holding tank replacement. All solids (septage) and liquids must be removed from the tank by a registered sewage hauler and disposed of at a licensed liquid waste disposal facility.

Please complete and submit this form to the RMOW Building Department within seven days of decommissioning your on-site wastewater septic tank, holding tank or treatment system.

## **Decommissioning Out-Of-Service Septic Tanks**

**The following guidance is provided by; WCOWMA Onsite Wastewater Management Association of BC:**

Septic tanks and holding tanks contain toxic gases and pathogens and must be decommissioned properly in order to avoid contaminating the environment or causing a safety issue to the unsuspecting.

The recommended practice for decommissioning a septic or holding tank is as follows:

1. All solids and liquids must be removed by a registered hauler and disposed of at a licensed sewage treatment plant, lagoon or receiving facility.
2. Any electrical devices or components must be removed and disposed of. Devices containing mercury, such as pump floats, must be disposed of at a licensed hazardous waste disposal facility.
3. Once solids and liquids have been removed the empty tank should be filled with clean sand, gravel or other acceptable material and sealed.
4. The area should be graded and vegetative cover (grass) must be established.

The best practice would be to fill the empty tank rather than crush it as crushing a tank will introduce contaminants into the surrounding soil.

**\*\*Septic tanks, whether in use or out-of-use pose a significant safety hazard to animals and small children. Lids must be secured to ensure unauthorized access is denied\*\***

### **Disposal fields:**

The disposal field may be left in place if there are no plans to use the area for other purposes. If present, inspection ports should be removed and backfilled.

If disposal field removal is selected the property owner should engage an environmental consultant to ensure the removal process is completed in a manner that does not create a health or environmental hazard.

### **Reporting**

Within seven days of decommissioning a septic tank, or holding tank, persons performing the decommissioning must file a record stating that the system was decommissioned in accordance with this guideline. The decommissioning form can also be obtained from the RMOW Infrastructure Services Department. Phone: 604-935-8192 or email [engineers@whistler.ca](mailto:engineers@whistler.ca)



## Onsite Wastewater System Decommissioning Form

The British Columbia Ministry of Health “Sewerage System Standard Practice Manual, Version 3, 2014” requires property owners properly decommissioning on-site wastewater systems when the use of such a system is discontinued due to the connection to a public sewer system.

**Please complete and submit this form to the RMOW Building Department within seven days of decommissioning your on-site wastewater septic tank, holding tank or treatment system.**

Name of property owner: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of out-of-service system: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Property civic address)

The septic tank/holding tank located at the above noted location was pumped of its

contents on: (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

by: (Name of registered hauler) \_\_\_\_\_

The septic tank/holding tank at the above location was backfilled with sand/gravel or suitable

inorganic soil on: (Date) \_\_\_\_\_.

(Please check appropriate box)

- Disposal field to be dismantled.
- Disposal field will not be dismantled.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of owner

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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**For RMOW Use Only**

Reviewed by \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Include in Building Dept. property file.