

Sturgeon County requires septic tank permits

The Safety Codes Act requires that permits in Alberta be obtained before any work begins on buildings covered by the Alberta Building and Fire Codes, the Canadian Electrical Code, the Gas Code, the National Plumbing Code, or the Alberta Private Sewage Systems Standard of Practice.

A Plumbing permit (your system connects to a septic tank, and the tank goes to the Municipal system) or Private Sewage permit (private disposal) is required in Sturgeon County for the installation or replacement of a septic tank. Please contact the Safety Codes Administrator at sassistant@sturgeoncounty.ca or 780-939-8276.

The property owner is responsible for arranging all the necessary permits unless your contractor has done this on your behalf. Failure to comply will result in a bylaw infraction fine and costs to bring the project into compliance.

When you get a permit, certified safety code inspectors will:

- give you expert advice,
- review your plans to find any potential problems,
- inspect your project, and
- make sure your project meets the applicable provincial code.



Please scan the QR code to view the Alberta Private Sewage Systems, Standards of Practice 2021.



Contact Us

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Sturgeon County Low-pressure sewer systems



Low-pressure sewer systems

Low-pressure sewer systems are commonly used in rural and acreage communities in Sturgeon County. Owners of low-pressure sewer systems are required to have their own two-stage septic tanks. Instead of pumping the liquid effluent to fields or mounds system, as is usually done on farms or isolated acreages, the wastewater is pumped into a liquid wastewater collection force main (a force main is used to move wastewater from a lower to higher elevation).

Who is responsible?

The individual pump system is the responsibility of the property owner. Annual inspection and servicing of the pump system by a qualified service person or company is recommended.

Maintenance & cleaning

In a septic tank, the solid waste settles to the bottom and is eaten by the anaerobic bacteria.

Over time, these solids accumulate and reduce the storage capacity of the septic chamber. In addition, grease, soap curds, and other material will collect and float on the surface. The tank should be pumped when the bottom layer of sludge is within 18 inches of the tank outlet. Cleaning the tank in the spring allows the bacterial action to re-establish quickly in the warm summer temperatures.

The Alberta Safety Codes recommends hiring a vacuum truck to clean the solid waste that doesn't biodegrade. A tank is usually vacuumed every two years.



Regular inspections

The septic pump requires regular inspection and maintenance to ensure a long life. Pumps may either be a submersible sewage pump installed in the second chamber (liquid chamber) of the septic tank, or a centrifugal pump installed in the basement with a suction line to the second chamber.

- The use of a single chamber tank with a grinder pump is not permitted.
- All pump connections must have double check valves downstream of the pump discharge to prevent backflow of municipal sewage into the septic tank.
- Back flow preventers typically have a life of 15 to 20 years and should be inspected regularly.

Shutoff valve (CC valve)

The shutoff valve (CC valve) must only be operated by Sturgeon County Utility and Waste Management Services (UWMS) staff. Plumbers, homeowners, and contractors are not permitted to operate this valve. Failure to comply will result in a bylaw infraction fine.

If the valve needs to be turned on or off, please call the UWMS department at (780) 939-4321 during regular business hours to book an appointment.

When a valve is turned on, Sturgeon County requires the owner to be present to ensure that the backflow prevention devices are working properly and sewage is not backing up into the tank, basements, etc.

UWMS staff are available 24 hours in case of an emergency. Call (780) 939-4321, or toll free 1-866-939-9003 and ask for Utility and Waste Management Services.

Septic tank recommendations

- A two-compartment tank, sized, and constructed in accordance with the Alberta Plumbing Code is recommended.
- Extend the tank access risers at least 150 mm above finished ground surface.
- Use watertight manhole covers.
- Divert surface runoff away from the manhole cover.

Septic pump recommendations

It is recommended that either a submersible or centrifugal septic pump meet the following:

- Be a CSA approved effluent pump. The minimum head recommended for a low-pressure pump is 18 metres (26 psi). Generally, this requires a good ½ hp pump.
- Be capable of a three-minute minimum pump run time at 1 L/s pumping rate.

Recommended size

In some locations, such as at high elevations within the system, smaller pumps can be used. However, if the pump is not large enough, it may not be able to overcome the pressure within the system during normal demands.

The maximum head for a low-pressure pump is 24 metres (35 psi). Pumps with a higher discharge head are only permitted if all pumps and mains within the system have been designed to accommodate the higher pressure.

The size for low-pressure sewer connections is 38 mm or 1.5 inches in diameter. Each service line will have an isolation/shutoff valve (CC valve) located at the edge of the serviced property.