

Williamson County & Cities Health District Environmental Services



On-Site Sewage Facility (OSSF) and Floodplain Guide for Williamson County

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OSSF Permit Application Fees

Residential	
Standard OSSF	\$310
Non-Standard/Proprietary OSSF	\$410
Aerobic OSSF	\$510
Commercial	
Non-Aerobic OSSF	\$610
Aerobic OSSF	\$710
Subdivision Review Fees	
Single Lot Review	\$80
Subdivision Review	\$125 per plat plus \$10 per lot
Floodplain Review Fees	
Certificate of Compliance (CC)	\$25*
Development Permit (FPDP)	\$75

*Note: \$25.00 of the OSSF permit application fees for residential and commercial properties is the Floodplain Review Fee (or CC). Ten dollars (\$10.00) of the OSSF permit application fee for residential and commercial entities is for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Research Council Fund. Fees effective October 1, 2004.

Floodplain Status Determination and OSSF Permit Application Procedures

Floodplain Status Determination

In Williamson County, floodplain status must be determined for lots before construction begins. The floodplain status review is conducted at the time application is made for an On-Site Sewage Facility (OSSF) permit. If the construction site does not lie in close proximity to or within the 100-year floodplain, a floodplain Certificate of Compliance (CC) is issued. If the construction site lies in close proximity to or within the 100-year floodplain, a Floodplain Development Permit (FPDP) is required. The FPDP defines building restrictions. To meet the floodplain building requirements, applicants are required to contract with a professional land surveyor or engineer to certify the floor elevation of the structure and or possible effect of the development on the floodplain. Elevation certification forms are provided with the permit application by the Williamson County and Cities Health District (WCCHD) office and on the WCCHD website <http://www.publichealthwilliamson.org>. The elevation certificate form is also available on the FEMA website <http://www.fema.gov>. Completion of the FPDP application process is accomplished when the surveyor or engineer returns the completed elevation certification and/or any other required documentation to the WCCHD Environmental Services Division office. Upon receiving the required elevation certification and/or any other required documentation, WCCHD will review the application for compliance with county regulations. After WCCHD receives all the certification documentation needed to verify compliance, the FPDP will be issued.

Subdivision Review or Single Lot Review

If the property for which an OSSF permit is requested (OSSF permitting described below) was not properly subdivided, it must first go through a county subdivision review process or a single lot review. The appropriate fee must be paid for this review. WCCHD Environmental Services Division staff will determine if the applicant needs to be referred to the Williamson County Engineer for a determination as to whether the subdivision must undergo the county’s subdivision review process or the WCCHD single lot review process. Property owners may also be required to obtain a culvert permit from the Williamson County Engineer whenever a driveway meets a county road.

On-Site Sewage Facility (OSSF) Permit

The WCCHD Environmental Services Division issues OSSF permits for Williamson County. WCCHD staff inspects the OSSF at various points during the installation process. A final inspection must be passed before the septic system can be put into use. All lots created since September 27, 1999 in Williamson County that utilize an OSSF must be at least one (1) acre if served by public water and two (2) acres if it is not served by public water. The process of applying for the OSSF permit and receiving approval for installation can take up to 2 months (or possibly longer if substantial revisions to the original plan must be performed). Please initiate this process well in advance of construction to avoid delays.

Steps Necessary to Obtain an OSSF Permit:

1. The applicant for an OSSF permit must provide a copy of the owner's deed and/or the survey with the permit application. If the person applying for the permit is not the owner, a notarized letter authorizing the application from the owner is required. OSSF permit applications must be completed in person at 303 Main St., Georgetown, TX 78626. The applicant must provide payment for the OSSF permit application at the time of application (cash or check only). **PERMITS ARE VALID FOR ONE YEAR FROM THE DATE OF PURCHASE (no refunds).**
2. At the time of application for an OSSF permit, a job site identification tag is provided which must be posted at the job site. This tag identifies the location of the property, but does not give permission to build the structure. The tag indicates the permit application number and the address of the property. **Permission to build is only given after the OSSF and floodplain documents have been reviewed and found to be in compliance with all applicable regulations.**
3. The applicant will be asked to locate the property on the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) FIRM maps, located in the WCCHD Environmental Services Division office in Georgetown. The applicant must also draw a map providing directions to the property.
4. The applicant must provide to WCCHD Environmental Services Division a site evaluation that includes a soil report performed by a professional site evaluator (see details on the site evaluation below). The site evaluation is crucial in the design of an appropriate OSSF for the site conditions. If an OSSF is wrongly selected, designed, installed, operated, or maintained the system can fail. If that occurs, WCCHD can file charges in court to mandate compliance.
5. For the site evaluation, the owner of the property is responsible to have excavated a minimum of two profile holes, 24 inches wide and five feet deep (2-3 feet deep for surface applications) or to a solid rock layer. The holes must be located in opposite ends of the proposed drain field area. **The profile holes must remain open for verification of accuracy and completeness of the site evaluation.**
6. The owner must contact a professional engineer or state registered site evaluator to examine the holes. The site evaluator must check for all criteria concerning the OSSF as detailed in the Texas Commission of Environmental Quality (TCEQ) RULES (refer to [http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=30&pt=1&ch=30](http://info.sos.state.tx.us/pls/pub/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=30&pt=1&ch=30)), including; topography, subsoil type, subsoil texture, subsoil structure, soil depth, restrictive horizons, groundwater, flood hazards, wells, and other site suitability features.
7. The site evaluation report should include every OSSF type that is acceptable for the soil and site conditions. If the site evaluation report does not include every OSSF type that is acceptable, the owner may want to request this from his/her engineer/site evaluator since there are advantages and disadvantages to different OSSF types. See the General Site Considerations for OSSF and the Comparison of OSSF types on the following pages.

After the site evaluation results have been submitted, the WCCHD Environmental Services Division will verify the results with a site visit(s). Confirmation or correction of the site evaluation will be sent to the property owner. This verification process by WCCHD is normally conducted in less than 10 days.

8. After notice of approval of the site evaluation report is issued by WCCHD, the owner must provide a design to the WCCHD to review. A standard or evapotranspiration OSSF design does not require a professional design unless the system will be within the floodplain or recharge zone. A registered sanitarian or professional engineer is required for all non-standard designs. The design plan must address in detail all components of the OSSF system such as cleanouts, drainpipe configuration, valve placement etc...
9. Upon receiving the design and all appropriate documents for the OSSF, the WCCHD Environmental Services Division prioritizes design reviews by the date received for review. The initial review process may take up to 30 days. If corrections are required, additional time will be necessary for the additional design review(s) prior to approval for installation.
10. Upon approval of the OSSF design, the permit to construct letter is issued by WCCHD. This authorization allows for the construction of the OSSF either by a licensed installer or by the property owner if the structure is his/her own single family dwelling. Construction may not begin until the permit to construct letter is issued.

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11. The OSSF must be inspected by WCCHD Environmental Services Division staff at the critical phases of installation.
12. If extra inspections are required, additional fees may be levied. Extra inspections may be required if, for example, the system fails the inspection or the system is particularly complex. Except in cases of equipment breakdown or unexpected weather changes, installers are expected to be ready for inspection during the morning or afternoon for which they arranged the inspection.
13. Upon final approval, a License to Operate is issued.

For additional information, visit the WCCHD website at <http://www.publichealthwilliamson.org> or contact the WCCHD Environmental Services Division office.

General Site Considerations for OSSF

In considering a site for an OSSF, owners/designers should consider several issues. The OSSF should be in a level area with ample sunshine. In addition, the general guidelines for minimum separation distances (see page 4) should be taken into account. Note that these separation distances are a guide. Other separation distances, both shorter and longer, may be permitted or required. Please contact the WCCHD Environmental Services Division to discuss setback distances for special conditions.

Installation Requirements

These installation requirements apply to OSSFs with a standard drain field.

FILTRATION: Filtration should be provided in the second compartment. A commercially produced effluent filter is highly recommended in the second compartment of the septic tank. Filters prevent a percentage of suspended solids from entering and clogging the drainfield.

VALVE: When required, a water-tight diversion valve must be in place for the pipe and gravel inspection. If feasible, the flow line of the valve should be at least 12 inches above the bottom of a standard ET drainfield. A Schedule 40 (or equivalent) pipe must be used from house to tank; SDR 35 or better is required from tank to field. The valve **MUST NOT** be placed in the area between the drain fields.

FIELDS: Fields must be on grade, properly sized and at the proper depth for the first inspection. Fields **MUST** contain specified amount of clean rock with the required amount of perforated pipe properly placed within the gravel. Pipe **MUST BE** placed in accordance with the approved design. If installing ABSORPTION BEDS, they must contain 12" of gravel. For a Pipe and Gravel inspection **EACH OF THE FOUR CORNERS** and an additional six random holes must be exposed down to the excavation bottom for grade verification. Requirements vary by type of system installed.

MONITOR WELLS: Monitor wells must be in place at the time of the first inspection. The wells must go to the bottom of the field, but may be located within the sand wicks or in the gravel layer. Monitor wells must be a minimum of three (3) inches in diameter, equipped with sanitary threaded caps, and can be perforated at the bottom.

INSTALLATION: Except in cases of equipment breakdown or unexpected weather changes, installers are expected to be ready for inspection during the morning or afternoon for which they arranged the inspection. **INSTALLERS ARE RESPONSIBLE** for canceling scheduled inspections due to over-night weather conditions. **THE INSTALLER OR HOMEOWNER WILL BE CHARGED A FEE FOR EACH EXTRA SITE VISIT MADE.**

Minimum Required Separation Distances for OSSF's

FROM	TO	DISTANCES*
Private well/cistern	Septic tank	50'
	Drain fields	100'
Public well	Septic tank /sewer lines	50'
	Drain fields	150'
Water supply lines	Tanks, fields or trenches	10'
Streams, ponds from water level	Tanks, fields or trenches	75' (50 w/ ATUs)
Foundations, structures & surface improvements	Tanks, fields or trenches	5'*
Property lines & easements	Subsurface tanks, fields or trenches	5'*
Property lines & living structures	Edge of effluent irrigation areas	50'
Sprinkler systems w/o High Hazard Backflow Prevention Device installed	All components of OSSF	10'

* Contact the WCCHD Environmental Services Division for swimming pools or special setbacks on systems utilizing aerobic treatment.

Comparison of OSSF Types

Treatment Type OSSF's

Type:	Advantages:	Disadvantages:
Septic Tank (2 compartment)	Low maintenance, no electrical components, low installation cost.	Low treatment.
Constructed Wetlands	No electrical components, high effluent treatment. Decreases groundwater/restrictive layer setbacks.	Requires maintenance contract, affidavit and possibly disinfection. High installation costs. Some homeowner maintenance.
Aerobic Treatment Unit (ATU)	High effluent treatment. Decreases groundwater/restrictive layer setbacks.	Requires maintenance contract, affidavit, and disinfection. Utilizes electricity for aerator, pumps, and alarms. High homeowner oversight.
Sand Filters	Minimal electrical components. High effluent treatment and filtration. Decreases groundwater/restrictive layer setbacks.	High installation costs.

Disposal Type OSSF's

Type:	Advantages:	Disadvantages:
Standard Absorption	No requirements for electrical components, low maintenance costs, and low installation costs.	Increased setbacks from restrictive impermeable layers and ground water.
Leaching Chambers / Gravel-less Pipe	Like standard system without rock or pipe. Increased storage capacity, low installation cost, reduction in size requirements.	Increased setbacks from restrictive impermeable layers and ground water. Some cost increase over standard system.
Standard Evapotranspiration	No electrical components, low maintenance cost.	Increased setbacks from restrictive layers and ground water. High installation cost. Large drain field area.
Low Pressure Dose (LPD) Mound / LPD	Decreased setbacks from restrictive layers. Better treatment, even distribution. Low maintenance; no maintenance contract required.	Utilizes pump. Less storage capacity than standard. High installation cost for mound.
Drip Irrigation	Low groundwater/restrictive layer setbacks. High effluent treatment. More even distribution. Irrigates at root zone of plants.	Utilizes pump or pump and compressor. Requires secondary treatment and maintenance contract. Higher maintenance cost.
Surface Irrigation	Low groundwater/restrictive layer setbacks. High treatment, low installation costs.	Utilizes pump or pump and compressor. Requires secondary treatment, maintenance contract, affidavit and disinfection. High maintenance cost. Higher homeowner oversight.