Frequently Asked Questions: Septic Systems

Land use requirements pertaining to septic systems in Crosslake are outlined in the City of Crosslake Land Use Ordinance and Minnesota Chapters 7080-7083, which are available on our website.

Please consult the Land Use Ordinance and Chapters 7080-7083 for further information on requirements and regulations or contact our office with any questions or comments. We look forward to working with you.

1. How do I get a permit to install a septic system?

Contact a state-licensed septic system designer to determine the appropriate system size and location for your property. After working with you, the designer will submit a design to County Environmental Services for review. Once your design is approved by Environmental Services, you can submit an application with the appropriate fee to the City of Crosslake.

A fee schedule, and a list of designers are available in our office and on our website @ www.cityofcrosslake.org

2. What do I need to do after I obtain a permit?

Unless the homeowner is installing the system, the responsibility generally shifts to the septic system installer. It is required that the installer contact Environmental Services for an inspection 24 hours prior to covering the system. Once the inspection is approved, a certificate of installation will be issued. See the City of Crosslake Land Use Ordinance Article 31, Sec. 26-815 for more details.

3. Do I need a permit to replace my pump?

A permit is not needed in the City of Crosslake for septic system maintenance such as pump replacement, manhole lid replacement, pipe repair, and filter cleaning/replacement. If you are unsure, please call Environmental Services and we will gladly answer your questions.

4. What is a compliance inspection?

A compliance inspection is used to determine if a septic system meets local and state requirements. The inspection must be conducted by a state-licensed inspector. The inspector looks at the septic tank(s) to determine if they are watertight. The inspector reviews the drainfield to ensure it has the minimum required vertical separation between the bottom of the drainfield and the periodically saturated soil or bedrock. Additionally, the inspector checks to see if the system is functioning properly overall. If the inspection passes, a certificate of compliance is issued.

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This document is intended to assist our customers in answering frequent questions about land use requirements in Crow Wing County. Please note that this guide is only a summary and not intended as a legal authority on specific land use requirements.

Questions?

Contact us at (218) 692-2689 or crosslakepz@crosslake.net or www.cityofcrosslake.org

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5. When do I need a compliance inspection?

A compliance inspection is required for all building permits and public hearing applications. A compliance inspection is also required for property transfers. However, the inspection requirement does not apply if a compliance inspection was conducted within the last three years or the septic system was installed within the last five years or has a valid operating permit. See Article 31, Sec 26-811 of the Land Use Ordinance for more details on the City's compliance inspection program.

6. How can my system be failing?

Often times we hear of systems "working" or that homeowners have never had a problem with the system despite the fact that an inspector just failed it. A septic system is not only considered failing if it is discharging to the ground surface or backing up into a dwelling, but it can also be failing if the bottom of the drainfield has less than the required vertical separation distance from the water table or any other restricting layer. See Article 31, Sec. 26-804 for more details.

7. How can I take better care of my septic system?

Homeowners can start by working with a septic system professional to develop a management plan for their specific system. A management plan can help the homeowner understand the importance of a regular pumping schedule and how to establish the pumping schedule that is right for their specific system. A management plan can also help the homeowner understand the importance of monitoring water use, repairing leaky fixtures, limiting the use of antibacterial products and household cleaners, and knowing what types of products and medications are potentially detrimental to a septic system. For more detailed information regarding the use of your septic system and management plans, please visit the University of Minnesota website (www.septic.umn.edu). There is an Owner's Guide available to purchase as well as many free resources. In the end, it is important to remember that properly maintaining your septic system will help optimize the lifespan and performance of the system which is both environmentally and financially beneficial.

8. Is septic maintenance required?

Minnesota Rules Chapter 7080 requires new systems to be assessed a minimum of every three years to determine if the tanks need to be pumped out. The City of Crosslake requires that evidence of maintenance (tank pumping receipt, etc.) be submitted for all permits issued in the Shoreland District.

9. What can I do to prevent my septic system from freezing?

Although there is no one solution that will work for every situation, there are many things that can be done to help prevent septic systems from freezing. Here are a few ideas to start with. There are many more available on the University of Minnesota website.

- Do not mow the grass over the top of the drainfield in the fall.
- Spread 8-12 inches of loose leaves, hay, or straw on top of the drainfield, tank(s), and the pipes going to and from the tank(s).
- If you are going to be out of town for more than 2 days, have a friend or neighbor stop over periodically and use an appliance such as a dishwasher to inject warmth into the system.

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