



Post Office Box 375  
320 Ingersoll  
Crookston, MN 56716  
(218) 281-6445

TO: All applicants

FROM: Polk County Planning and Zoning

DATE: 2013 Building Season

RE: Septic compliance inspection before issuing building permit

Minnesota Rules Ch. 7080 along with the DNR's Shoreland Management Program mandates that all new construction in shoreland and floodplain areas, or new construction or replacement of a house and/or bedroom addition in non-shoreland areas requires a septic compliance inspection before a permit is issued. (Homeowners will not be required to obtain a septic compliance inspection if they have installed a new system within the last five (5) years or if they have received a septic compliance inspection within the last three (3) years.) **Polk County Planning and Zoning cannot issue a permit until the results of the compliance inspection are submitted to this office.**

A septic compliance inspection requires the homeowner to contract with a licensed compliance inspector to certify the septic system meets the minimum state codes. The following is a brief list of those minimum codes:

- 1) Three feet of vertical separation between the bottom of the drainfield and the saturated soil layer. (Two feet of vertical separation on existing systems in non-shoreland areas built before March 31, 1996).
- 2) The system is not a cesspool, drywell, or leaching pit.
- 3) The septic system does not discharge to the ground surface, ground water or surface water.
- 4) The septic system does not create an adverse impact or threat to public health or safety. (Ex. The system does not discharge into a building utilized for human occupancy, like a basement.)

A list of licensed septic compliance inspectors has been included for your convenience. In the event that the existing septic system is found to be failing, a septic system permit must be obtained prior to the issuance of the building permit. If you have any question or concerns, please contact our office at (218) 281-5700 or 1-800-482-6804. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

## DID YOU KNOW...

A septic system may fail in two ways:

- The system may fail to hydraulically accept all of the wastes discharged into it. Hydraulic failure is apparent by sewage surfacing in the yard or by sewage backup in the home.
- It may fail to properly treat the sewage. Failure to treat effluent can result in the discharging of sewage into a draintile, a body of water or gravelly soil with no filtration capacity. This can easily result in groundwater or surface water pollution. This method of failure is more difficult to detect, hard to understand and harder to accept for landowners since it is often not readily seen. In Shoreland areas, a system with less than 3 feet of vertical separation from the bottom of the drainfield to the seasonally saturated soils is NOT properly treating the sewage and is considered non-conforming. Or, a system that includes a cesspool, dry well or seepage pit is a non-conforming system because it inadequately treats sewage as well.

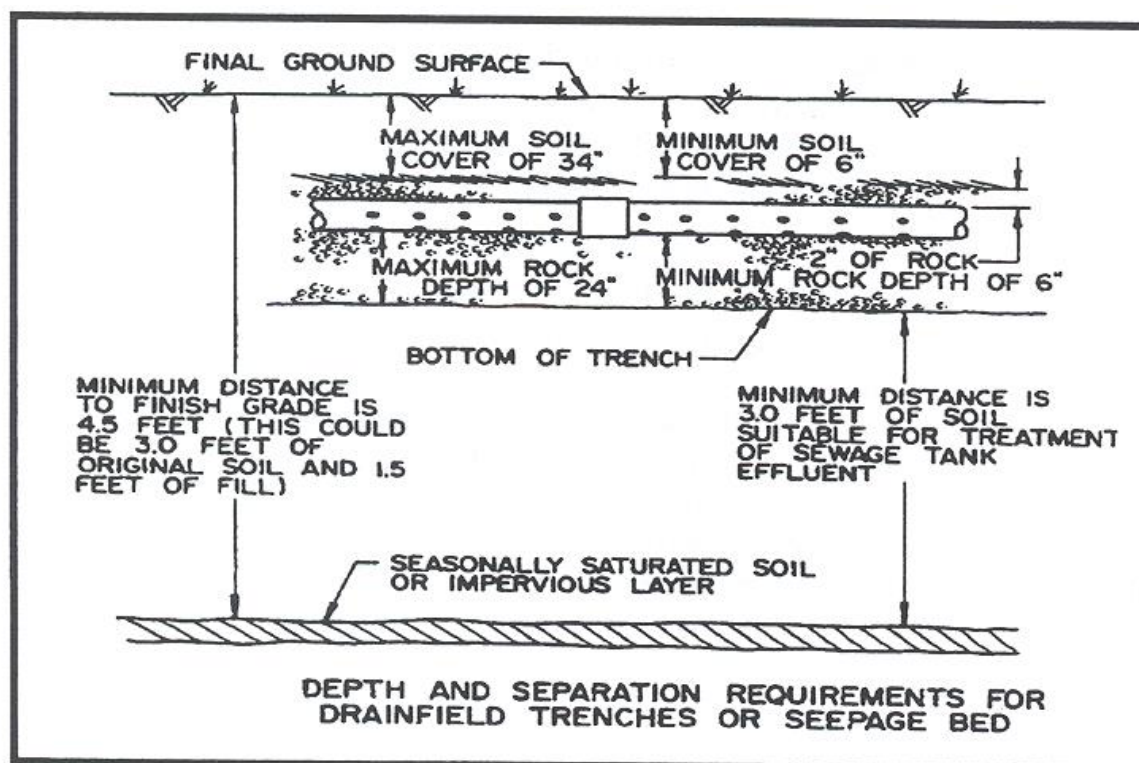


Figure H-1