



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
**Tuscarawas County
Health Department**

Home Sewage Treatment System (HSTS) Operation & Maintenance (O&M) Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is Operation & Maintenance (O&M) and why do I need an Operation Permit?

The O&M Program is a state-wide initiative to ensure proper maintenance of Home Sewage Treatment Systems (HSTSs) to protect public health, minimize pollution of Ohio waters, and extend the lifetime of private sewage systems. Operation permits are required for all private sewage treatment systems by the Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 3701-29. Permits also provide homeowners with education on system maintenance.

When did TCHD's program start? How are systems being enrolled, and what is the timeline?

TCHD started implementation of a phased approach of enrollment into the O&M program in 2017. The program was temporarily halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, enrollment of systems with a mechanical or discharging component was reinitiated. Enrollment for all other system types took place in 2023/2024. As TCHD becomes aware of new systems, they are enrolled in the Operation Permit program.

What are the requirements for my Home Sewage Treatment System (HSTS)?

The inspection frequency, maintenance, and documentation requirements for your HSTS can be found in your Operation Permit. Requirements are determined by system design. Compliance with permit conditions is based on submission of service contracts, service reports, and/or pump reports by Tuscarawas County-registered service providers and pumpers. Operation permits are different from service contracts. If you have an HSTS that requires a service contract, that must be obtained from a registered service provider.

How do I find out what type of HSTS I have?

A copy of your HSTS records can be requested by calling (330) 343-5550 or emailing eh@tchdnow.org.

What will be the costs to property owners with the O&M program?


The cost of this Ohio mandated program will vary depending on HSTS type and on the service provider selected by each homeowner.



What does "renewable" mean?



Renewable means that operation permits will have expiration limits. This will require reapplying for and purchasing a new permit before it officially expires.

Is there a penalty if I don't pay?

Failure to pay for an operation permit will result in an additional 25% penalty fee. Unpaid fees may be added to the property owner's taxes.

 897 E. Iron Ave.
Dover, OH 44622

 (330) 343-5555
 (330) 343-1601

 www.tchdnow.org
 director@tchdnow.org

Updated: 11/24 CT



What are the fees used for?

The money generated from the O&M program will pay for the materials used for mailings, postage for mailings, and personnel costs for administering the program. Personnel costs include preparing mailings, maintaining the database, reviewing service reports, following up on non-compliance & system performance issues, providing homeowner education, and conducting quality control of registered service providers.

Will I have to update my old HSTS if it no longer meets current installation code requirements?

No. Systems will not be “failed” based solely on age, but instead evaluated on performance. Ohio law allows HSTSs in operation prior to 2015 to be deemed approved if they are not causing a public health nuisance.

Will I have to replace my HSTS if it is found to be creating a public health nuisance?

Not necessarily. If the nuisance situation can be eliminated by approved repairs, then the system will be deemed compliant. If repairs are not possible, TCHD will review replacement options with homeowners.

Who can perform the required maintenance on my HSTS?

Any registered service provider certified to service your type of HSTS can perform the required maintenance. A list of service providers can be found at: <https://www.tchdnow.org/operation-and-maintenance-program.html> Some HSTSs require that a registered service provider perform the required maintenance while for systems that were installed prior to 2007, homeowners may even become certified and provide their own maintenance.

Who submits the proof of required maintenance? How soon must reports be submitted?

A registered service provider or septage hauler typically submits proof of service. Homeowners are responsible for ensuring that reports are received by TCHD within 30 days of service.

What happens if I don't do the required maintenance?

Not completing the required maintenance may shorten the life expectancy of your HSTS. Not completing all set requirements per the issued permit may result in the system being enrolled into the Type 2 Annual Permit with associated fees and inspection requirements.

Additionally, a non-compliance inspection may be performed by TCHD. These inspections will not provide any needed service to the system and are intended to evaluate if a system is currently creating a public health nuisance. The cost of this non-compliance inspection will be invoiced to the property owner.

Is there any help for homeowners who cannot afford to replace their HSTS?

TCHD is always in search of grants and low interest loans for low-income families to replace their HSTSs. TCHD has been awarded \$150,000 in funding from Ohio EPA Water Pollution Control Loan Fund to assist income-eligible homeowners with the repair/replacement of failing septic systems. More information can be found by visiting <https://www.tchdnow.org/water-pollution-control-loanfund.html> .

Do Operation permits transfer ownership upon sale of a home?

Yes. Once a system is enrolled into the program, the Operation Permit issued will remain associated with the system and will transfer automatically to the new owner upon sale. Sellers are responsible for disclosing details of the operation permit terms and conditions to buyers.

I received a permit letter, but my neighbor/friend/relative did not. Why?

TCHD currently has records for over 8,500 home sewage treatment systems in Tuscarawas County. We understand there are many more systems than that. Unfortunately, many of our records contain addresses that are no longer in use, utilize intersections or areas as references for new builds instead of parcel numbers or addresses, or have been installed prior to needing permits or without a valid permit. TCHD plans to continue to enroll systems into the program as we are made aware of them through nuisance complaints, point-of-sale transfers, or repairs and replacements.

Whom should I contact if I do not agree with this program or would like to issue a complaint?

This program is a State program and is governed under the Ohio Administrative Code. If you have concerns or wish to express your frustration with this program, we encourage you to reach out to your elected officials at the State level.

I have questions about my Home Sewage Treatment System (HSTS). Who should I call?

Call the Tuscarawas County Health Department Bureau of Environmental Health Services at (330) 343-5550 or email eh@tchdnow.org .