



Subject:	Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Policy	Bylaw Number:	DEV-2022-132
Date Approved:	November 7 th 2022	Date Modified	
Lead Department:	Building Department, Development Services Division		

POLICY STATEMENT:

1. The Town of Huntsville is committed to the protection of the health and integrity of the natural environment which is one of the Town's most valuable resources.
2. Further the Town of Huntsville is committed to the protection of water sources including wetlands, rivers, lakes and aquifers.
3. An objective of the Town of Huntsville is to take a proactive approach to environmental protection by ensuring that development on lands and waterfronts meet the highest standards. This includes the maintenance or improvement of sewage systems within the Town of Huntsville.

PURPOSE:

4. To establish a Discretionary Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program in Huntsville to be administered by the Building Department of the Development Services Division in accordance with the Ontario Building Code and the Town of Huntsville Property Standards By-law.
5. Through Discretionary Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program the Town educates property owners about preventative maintenance for private sewage systems that will include various preventative maintenance techniques including pumping out systems; keeping brush, trees and other plant roots away from the leaching bed area; protect the system from erosion; and ensuring that no structures are erected in the bed area.

DEFINITIONS

6. In this Policy/Procedure:

"Building Code" and "Code" means the regulations made under Section 34 of the Ontario Building Code Act (the Act);

"Committee" means the Property Standards Appeal Committee established under Section 15 of the Act;

"Effluent" means sanitary sewage that has passed through a treatment unit;

"Inspector" means a Property Standards Officer or other Town Staff appointed to enforce matters under the Property Standards By-law and the Ontario Building Code;

"Non-Residential Property" means a building or structure not occupied or capable of being occupied in whole or in part for residential occupancy and includes the lands and premises appurtenant thereto;



“Owner” means the person, for the time being, managing or receiving the rent of, or paying the municipal taxes on the land or premises, in connection with which the word is used, whether on his/her own account, or as agent, trustee, or any other person who would so receive the rent if such land and premises were let, and shall also include a lessee or occupant of the property, who under the terms of the lease is required to repair and maintain the property in accordance with the standards of maintenance and occupancy of the property;

“Person” means an individual, firm, corporation, association, or partnership;

“Property” means a building or structure, or part of a building or structure, and includes the premises appurtenant thereto and all mobile structures, outbuildings, fences, and erections thereon, whether heretofore or hereafter erected.;

“Repair” means the provision of such facilities and the making of additions or alterations, or the taking of such action as in restoring, renovating, and mending, as may be required so that the property shall conform to standards established in this by-law;

“Residential Property” means any property that is used or designed for use of a domestic establishment, in which one or more persons usually sleep and prepare and serve meals, and includes any lands or buildings that are appurtenant to such establishment, and all stairways, walkways, driveways, parking spaces, and fences associated with the dwelling or its yard;

“Sanitary sewage” means liquid or water borne waste,

- a) of industrial or commercial origin, or
- b) of domestic origin, including human body waste, toilet or other bathroom waste, and shower, tub, culinary, sink and laundry waste.

“Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program, Policy and Procedures” means a policy approved by the Council of the Town of Huntsville;

“Sewage System” means,

- a) a chemical toilet, an incinerating toilet, a recirculating toilet, a self-contained portable toilet and all forms of privy including a portable privy, an earth pit privy, a pail privy, a privy vault and a composting toilet system;
- b) a greywater system;
- c) a cesspool;
- d) a leaching bed system; or
- e) a system that requires or uses a holding tank for the retention of hauled sewage at the site where it is produced before its collection by a hauled sewage system;

where these,

- f) have a design capacity of 10,000 litres per day or less;
- g) have, in total, a design capacity of 10,000 litres per day or less, where more than one of these are located on a lot or parcel of land; and



- h) are located wholly within the boundaries of the lot or parcel of land on which is located the building or buildings they serve.

“Sewage” means sanitary sewage or storm sewage;

“Third Party Inspector” is an inspector that is qualified by the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MMA) to issue a certificate under the Discretionary Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program approved by the Minister. A copy of which is included in Appendix “B” to this policy and as may be updated by MMA from time to time.

“Treatment Unit” a device that, when designed, installed and operated in accordance with its design specification, provides a specific degree of sanitary sewage treatment to reduce the contaminant load from that of sanitary sewage to a given effluent quality;

“Town” means The Corporation of the Town of Huntsville.

SCOPE:

7. The Program will encompass all properties in the Town of Huntsville that have private sewage systems with a daily flow less than 10,000 litres in accordance with the Ontario Building Code (the “Code”).
8. While the initial focus of the program will be private sewage systems that are identified in accordance with this policy as being High Risk, the goal of the program in accordance with the Building Code will be to inspect every sewage system on every property in the Huntsville.
9. Through implementation, the Town will establish a re-inspection cycle to ensure that private sewage systems are inspected by the Town at least once in every 20 years.
10. The following classes of systems will be included:
 - 10.1 Class 1 - Privy;
 - 10.2 Class 2 - Greywater;
 - 10.3 Class 3 - Cesspool;
 - 10.4 Class 4 - Septic System; and
 - 10.5 Class 5 - Holding Tank.
11. The Program will include the components:
 - 11.1 Document Review to determine the risk associated with the private sewage system;
 - 11.2 Site Inspections, Phase 1 and/or Phase 2 inspections;
 - 11.3 Compliance Actions (if required); and
 - 11.4 Documentation and Reporting.



12. Each system will be evaluated by reviewing the documentation for the sewage system on every property. The property/system will be class based on the scale below:

High Risk	Proximity of the property/system to groundwater or residential drinking water source or well-intake or known areas of contamination; If there were no records of approved sewage system or if the system is greater than 25 years old, steel tanks, complaints received on systems; no use permit on file, no inspection on file for a issued septic permit, or no septic permit issued.
Moderate Risk	Approved sewage system between 10 and 25 years old.
Low Risk	Approved sewage system is less than 10 years old.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Document Review/Risk Assessment

13. Property files will be reviewed to determine the risk assessment of the sewage system.
14. If there are no records of a Sewage System in the property files, contact will be made with the property owner to request sewage system records. If this information cannot be provided, property owners will be required to contract a third party inspector to inspect and provide a report to the Town. The reports provided by qualified third-party contractors must include a Certificate, Discretionary Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program as approved by MAH.
15. Properties will be considered High Risk until the information is provided to the Town.
16. Any Sewage System that includes a steel septic and/or steel holding tank may be required to be replaced unless proven to be in good working order.

Maintenance Site Inspections

17. Inspections generally begin with a review of the available material, including material collected in the document review/risk assessment phase, and reports from previous inspections.

Phase 1: Maintenance Inspections

18. Phase 1 inspections are on-site and generally avoid significant disturbance of the systems and surrounding soil area.
19. Inspectors for the Town will generally during this phase:
- 19.1 make observations and take photographs of surface conditions and features such as structures, surface drainage, ponding, trees, vegetation, patios, swimming pools, etc.;
 - 19.2 identify the source of water supply (municipal, well, lake, etc);
 - 19.3 identify the use of special devices such as garbage grinders or water softeners;
 - 19.4 require confirmation of the general nature of the systems (class, components, type, layout, etc.);
 - 19.5 require confirmation of the size, material and the condition of the septic tanks or the holding tank; surface inspection of bed, tank, greywater pit and/or cesspool;



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- 19.6 require confirmation of the location of the systems' components with respect to wells, surface water, and other environmental features;
 - 19.7 obtain information from property owners about the dwelling (number of bedrooms, number of plumbing fixtures and size of dwelling);
 - 19.8 determine the approximate volume of the sewage generated;
 - 19.9 require a copy of date stamped receipt of tank pump out;
 - 19.10 identify any indication of sewage system failure, including:
 - 19.10.1 evidence of backup of effluent;
 - 19.10.2 signs of hydraulic failure (breakout of sewage, wetting conditions in the leaching bed area);
 - 19.10.3 condition of surface vegetation; and
 - 19.10.4 odour problems; and
 20. For sewage systems utilizing treatment units, Phase 1 Maintenance Inspection may also include the review of:
 - 20.1 The existence of a maintenance agreement and date of last servicing;
 - 20.2 The test results of a new round of effluent sampling; and
 - 20.3 Operational problems or system malfunction before, or at the time of inspection.
 21. During the Phase 1 Maintenance Inspection the Town may receive from property owners and accept a report from qualified third-party contractors. The reports provided by qualified third-party contractors must include a Certificate, Discretionary Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program as approved by MAH.

Phase 2: Maintenance Inspections

22. It may be more appropriate to undertake more intensive follow-up maintenance inspections where:
 - 22.1 the Phase 1 Maintenance Inspection has identified that the sewage system is at a high risk, or
 - 22.2 the Phase 1 Maintenance Inspection detected a malfunction or failure, but did not reveal the reason (e.g. by location or nature) of malfunction or failure.
23. Phase 2 inspections will require that owners uncover septic tanks, distribution boxes, dosing tanks and pumps when these components are used in sewage systems in order to be inspected, to determine their condition and functionality.



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24. Phase 2 Maintenance Inspections will typically include examinations of the following:
 - 24.1 The depth of the sludge layer and distance from the top of the sludge layer and the outlet tee;
 - 24.2 The thickness of scum layers;
 - 24.3 The distance between the bottom of the scum/grease layer and the bottom of the outlet tee;
 - 24.4 The distance between the top of the scum/grease layer and the top of the outlet tee;
 - 24.5 The physical condition of the inlet and outlet; and
 - 24.6 The condition of the effluent filter, if utilized.
 25. Phase II inspections will be required as part of the inspection process dependent upon the class and risk of system. Phase II inspections of a sewage systems may consider:
 - 25.1 soil type and its permeability;
 - 25.2 additional sources of hydraulic loading (e.g. surface discharge, roof drains);
 - 25.3 trees and deep rooting shrubs in the vicinity of the sewage system;
 - 25.4 encroachments into the leaching bed area (e.g. building additions, patios, driveways, pools); and
 - 25.5 require documentation of previous effluent sampling test results where required (i.e., under Article 8.9.2.4. of the Building Code).
 26. Blockages in the leaching bed may be identified by measures including:
 - 26.1 evaluation of in-home plumbing and estimates of water usage;
 - 26.2 conducting a leak diagnostics;
 - 26.3 conducting a flow trial;
 - 26.4 conducting a dye tracing test; and
 - 26.5 excavating a cross section of the leaching bed.
 27. During the Phase 2 Maintenance Inspection the Town may receive from property owners and accept a report from qualified third-party contractors. The reports provided by qualified third-party contractors must include a Certificate, Discretionary Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program as approved by MAH.



Inspection Reports

28. Inspection reports will be completed by Town Staff on-site during any of the Site Inspection, Phase 1 or Phase 2 Maintenance Inspections. A copy retained for municipal records in the property file. The report will include:
 - 28.1 identification of the property attended;
 - 28.2 identification of any pertinent information collected as part of the inspection including the status of any deficiencies noted in a previous report;
 - 28.3 deficiencies identified and remedial action required, if any; and
 - 28.4 enforcement action taken.

Compliance Action/Owner Notification

29. If a system is in need of remedial action, a letter will be sent to the property owner to describe the deficiencies identified by the inspector, and to provide the property owner with the contact information for the inspector in order to obtain further information and to outline their intentions to remedy the deficiencies.
30. The owner will also be informed that if they do not respond within a specified time frame, they may be issued an Order to Comply under the Town's Property Standards By-law.
31. If no deficiencies are identified through the Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program, the property owner will not be contacted; however, inspection reports will be maintained in the property file.
32. Should a property owner require a copy of the Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Report, it may be requested from the Town. Fees for a copy of the report will be charged in accordance with the Town's Fees and Charges By-law.
33. In the event, that a property has been determined to be in High Risk and the property owner fails to respond to the request for a Third Party Inspection Report/Certificate, the Town may contract a third party inspector and the cost will be the responsibility of the owner which will be invoiced to the property owner in accordance with the Town's Fees and Charges By-law.

Immediate Orders

34. Based on the Document Review or a Phase 1 or Phase 2 Maintenance Inspection, Orders to remedy immediately may be issued by the Inspector if there is any evidence of the sewage system failing.

Staff Responsibilities

35. The Chief Building Official has the authority to implement this Program and to establish the inspection cycle to ensure that the obligations under the Code are met with respect to the Discretionary Maintenance Inspection Program.



DELEGATED AUTHORITY

- 36. The Chief Building Official subject to the approval of the Director of Development Services and in accordance with the Code, is granted the authority to:
 - 36.1 modify the implementation procedures to clarify staff and property owner's requirements and responsibilities;
 - 36.2 modify the Inspection Report to enhance the quality of reporting; and
 - 36.3 update the policy references and forms based on changes to the Code.

EFFECTIVE

- 37. This Policy shall become effective immediately upon approval by Council.
- 38. This Policy shall be reviewed once per term of Council.



APPENDIX "A"

INSPECTION REPORT FORM



File Information: Approval Required

Property Owner		Roll #	
Address		Permit #	
Approval	MOEE <input type="checkbox"/> Health Dept. <input type="checkbox"/> Building Dept. <input type="checkbox"/> Use Permit <input type="checkbox"/> Final <input type="checkbox"/>		
Type of Building	Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Bunkie <input type="checkbox"/>		
State the number of	Bedrooms _____ Bathrooms _____ Floor area excluding basement _____		
Type of Tank	Concrete <input type="checkbox"/> Steel <input type="checkbox"/> Treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic <input type="checkbox"/> Tank sizes _____		
Type of System	Filter Bed <input type="checkbox"/> Trench Bed <input type="checkbox"/> Class A <input type="checkbox"/> Holding Tank <input type="checkbox"/>		
System size	Bed size _____ sq m Pipe length _____ m Holding Tank size _____ L		
Water Supply	Drilled Well <input type="checkbox"/> Dug Well <input type="checkbox"/> Municipal <input type="checkbox"/> Lake <input type="checkbox"/>		
Sewage Pump	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

Field Information

General Bed Condition		Notes
Overgrown	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Erosion	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Visible break out	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Odour	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Distribution Box	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Follow Up Required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Other	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	

Office Use

Maintenance Required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Date:
Re-Inspection	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Order	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Permit Required	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Date of Compliance:		
Inspector's Signature:		Date:



APPENDIX "B"

MMA Approved – Third Party Certificate

Person Signing Certificate

(Name, Address, Business telephone number, Building Code Identification Number, if applicable)

Certificate
Discretionary Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Program
(pursuant to Article 1.10.1.3. of Division C of the Building Code)

Certificate Number: _____ Date Certificate Issued: _____

Address of Property on which Sewage System is Located: (hereinafter called the "Property")

Owner of Property on which Sewage System is Located:

Certificate issued to (name and address of Principal Authority):

Town of Huntsville, 37 Main ST E, Huntsville ON P1H 1A1

Certification

I certify that:

- (a) I am a person described in Sentence 1.10.1.3.(3) of Division C of the Building Code.
- (b) I have conducted an inspection of the sewage system located at the Property.
- (c) I am satisfied on reasonable grounds that the sewage system located on the Property is in compliance with the standards enforced by the maintenance inspection program in relation to sewage systems established by [name of Principal Authority] under clause 7 (1)(b.1) of the *Building Code Act, 1992*.

Certificate issued by:

Name: _____

Complete as applicable:

- BCIN _____
- I am the holder of a licence, a certificate of practice or a temporary licence under the *Architects Act*.
- I am a person who holds a licence or a temporary licence under the *Professional Engineers Act*.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

This certificate is approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing under the *Building Code Act, 1992*

[Personal information contained in this form and schedules is collected under the authority of clause 34(2.1)(c) of the *Building Code Act, 1992* and will be used in the administration and enforcement of the *Building Code Act, 1992*. Questions about the collection of personal information may be addressed to: a) the Chief Building Official of the municipality or upper-tier municipality to which this application is being made, or, b) the inspector having the powers and duties of a chief building official in relation to sewage systems or plumbing for an upper-tier municipality, board of health or conservation authority to whom this application is made, or, c) Director, Building and Development Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing 777 Bay St., 2nd Floor, Toronto, M5G 2E5 (416) 595-6666.]