

Bylaw 3479 – Type 1

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Capital Regional District | August 2020

1. What are the issues around malfunctioning septic systems?

When septic systems malfunction, untreated or partially treated wastewater can be exposed. Untreated wastewater carries dangerous viruses and pathogens that can result in illness and pollution in our community. Malfunctioning septic systems cause contamination of groundwater and local streams, rivers and lakes, as well as contamination of shellfish beds and nutrient enrichment of sensitive water bodies. A homeowner may be unaware that their systems is malfunctioning.

The Capital Regional District (CRD), in cooperation with participating municipalities, implemented Bylaw No. 3479 in response to the provincial government Sewerage System Regulations. This bylaw ensures regular maintenance of our region's systems which will help to prevent the public health risks and environmental degradation associated with poorly maintained onsite septic systems.

2. What are Bylaw 3479 requirements?

The bylaw requires owners in the municipalities of Saanich, Langford, Colwood and View Royal with Type 1 systems to pump out their system every five years. For example, a pump out on February 1, 2020 is required to pump again by February 1, 2025. Five years is intended to be a maximum time frame; many systems require more frequent pumping depending on the size of the tank and the activities in your home. The septage receiving facility will notify the CRD of your pump out; however, owners are advised to keep their receipts as proof of service.

The bylaw requirements are different for Type 2 and 3 systems. Owners of Type 2 and 3 systems (package treatment plants) are required to maintain their system according to the maintenance plan for the system, and ensure it is maintained by an Authorized Person at least once per calendar year. A *Certification of Maintenance form* must be completed by an Authorized Person and sent in to the CRD annually. A copy of this form must also be retained by owners and be available to the CRD upon request.

3. What is the difference between Types 1, 2 and 3 septic systems?

Under the Provincial Sewerage System Regulation, septic systems are divided into Types 1, 2 and 3. Type 1 is treatment by septic tank and a drainfield. It may be gravity fed or pumped into the drainfield. Type 2 and Type 3 systems introduce further treatment in order to produce a higher quality effluent that can be discharged into a smaller sized drainfield. Type 2 and Type 3 systems are often used where there are site or soil constraints that prevent a Type 1 from being used. These systems often use a package treatment plant and they have mechanical or media components that require more frequent maintenance than Type 1 systems.

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4. Who can do work on a septic system?

The Provincial Sewerage System Regulation allows only *Authorized Persons* to design, plan, construct or do maintenance work on an onsite sewage system in BC. An Authorized Person is defined as a Professional Engineer or Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioner (ROWP) with education or experience in onsite sewage system construction and maintenance.

The Applied Science Technologists & Technicians of BC (ASTTBC) is the provincial registering body for Registered Onsite Wastewater Practitioners (ROWPs). To find a qualified ROWP in your area, please visit their website at: owrp.asttbc.org

The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC (APEGBC) maintains a list of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists undertaking services as Professionals under the Regulation. Under the Regulation, construction or maintenance of a Type 3 system must be under the supervision of a Professional. A list of Professionals can be found online at: <https://www.egbc.ca/Member-Directories/Professionals-for-Sewerage-System-Regulation>

5. What are the costs of septic maintenance?

Bylaw 3479 requires regular pump outs for Type 1 systems but that is only one part of maintenance. All components should be examined on a regular basis to determine their condition and allow for maintenance and cleaning to take place. The current (2020) industry costs on Vancouver Island are estimated to be as follows:

Pumping a septic tank:	\$400 - \$1200 (600 – 1000 gallon tank)
Inspection:	\$600 - \$1200
Maintenance, cleaning or repairs:	\$90-110 per hour

6. Do I need to submit my pump out and maintenance records to the CRD?

Pump out records are now automatically reported to the CRD through the disposal facility. However, homeowners should keep their receipts in case there is an error, such as their service provider does not report the address correctly.

7. More Information?

To contact the CRD regarding septic systems, call 250.360.3187 or email septic@crd.bc.ca

To report a malfunctioning septic system or for installation plans and drawings contact Island Health (VIHA) at 250.519.3401 or email gateway_office@viha.ca

For information on the Provincial Sewerage System Regulation visit <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/waste-management/sewage/onsite-sewage-systems>