



# TOWN OF COLRAIN

55 MAIN ROAD  
COLRAIN, MASSACHUSETTS 01340  
TELEPHONE (413) 624-3454  
FAX (413) 624-8852

TOWN WHERE A U.S. FLAG WAS FIRST  
RAISED OVER A PUBLIC SCHOOL. MAY, 1812

## SEPTIC SYSTEM PROCEDURES FOR NEW OR REPAIRED SYSTEM

September 2010  
INSTRUCTIONS FOR HOMEOWNER

### 1. PERC TEST

For the percolation test you need an engineer, a back hoe and a witness from the Board of Health (BOH). For witness phone number call the Town Office at 624-3454. Fee for witness is \$75.00 for 1<sup>st</sup> 3 hours and \$20.00 an hour thereafter. Payable at time of perc test.

### 2. PERMIT

Engineer generates Permit application and gives to homeowner. Homeowner signs and dates application, submits permit application, engineer's plans and any associated forms to BOH (Paula at town office.) Mon-Tues- Thurs 9am-4pm. Fee for application is \$25.00 to Town of Colrain. Enclose with application.

### 3. BOARD OF HEALTH

Reviews plans.  
Approves plans, signs the application and assigns a permit number.  
Notifies homeowner and issues copy of permit.

### 4. WHEN SYSTEM IS INSTALLED (before it is covered over.)

BOH is notified by either, the homeowner, the contractor or the engineer (48 hours notice please!!!!)  
Homeowner has copies of Plans and Permit on site for BOH inspector.  
BOH makes an inspection of the system.  
Engineer inspects system to make sure it was built to specifications.  
BOH signs homeowner's copy of Certificate of Compliance and signs original at town office.  
Inspection fee is \$25.00 to Town of Colrain, payable at time of inspection.

**SYSTEM CANNOT BE COVERED UNTIL BOTH, BOH AND ENGINEER  
HAVE DONE THEIR INSPECTIONS**

### 5. ENGINEER

Engineer sends BOH as built plans.

## PERC TEST:

What is referred to as a perc test is in fact two processes. First, a series of deep observation holes are dug, two for a repair and four for a new system. These holes are to determine that there is at least four feet of naturally occurring permeable soil and to determine the seasonal high water table. These holes are typically ten feet deep (or whatever the soils allow,) and approximately thirty feet apart.

Second the actual percolation test is done in a hole that allows access to the least permeable layer. Then a hole is dug about one foot in diameter and sixteen inches deep. Twelve inches of water is poured into the hole and kept there for fifteen minutes. Then the water is let to seep to nine inches and timed from nine inches to six inches. Divide by three and this gives the perc rate in inches per minute. The slower the perc rate the larger the system. Rates vary from less than two minutes per inch to 60 min/in for new and 90 min/in for a repair.

It is typical upon discovering a slow perc rate to dig more holes looking for a better area to site the soil absorption system. A slow perc rate means a larger system. A large system that has to be mounded can be more expensive than a pump system in an upper field. You can discuss with your engineer what your options might be.

It is also typical that ledge or other limiting factors might increase the number of holes that need to be dug.

## APRES PERC TEST:

Your engineer will set up a transit and do a topographic survey and set a bench mark. The engineer will then design a system to fit the constraints of the collected data. Most engineers will try to figure the most cost effective type of system to use. Some systems work better in some conditions and might influence decisions. Again it is advisable to discuss this with your engineer.

Your engineer will put together a packet for you with two copies of the plans and all necessary applications for you to sign and date. These you bring to the town hall with \$25 (check to Town of Colrain) and give to Paula. Office hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday from 9am to 4pm. 624-3454.

You will also have three other copies of the plans so you can get estimates from more than one installer. No two installers will give you the same price, so you cannot expect the engineer to be able to give you anything accurate in terms of an actual price. Some are very good at approximation.

If you have further questions you can call Paula at the town hall or Michael Friedlander at 624-3454.