



Community non-Community Sewerage

Fact Sheet

Currently the sewage program consists of reviews of plans and specifications with issuance of a permit to construct of collection and treatment systems and of response to complaints and issuance of violation notices for non-compliant systems. There is no funding for site visits unrelated to complaint response, for rule updates, nor for enforcement. Note that sewage regulation also affects economic development, HP&EP (ESF 12) and public safety.

Objective

The purpose of conducting plan reviews and issuing construction permits is to make sure that developments, collection systems and treatment systems have been properly designed by an engineer. Developers tend to want to cut corners unless there is DHH oversight and the result is insufficient slope to move sewage and poor treatment. The result is sewage backups in home and release to the environment (thus endangering health). Poor system operation often results in complaints, which are resolved through inspections and the issuance of enforcement actions.

Performance Indicators

- % of sewage complaints resolved
- % of permits issued after submittals

Narrative

Engineering Services Regional staff require plans and specifications to be submitted for review and permitting prior to construction of sewage collection systems (house to treatment plant) and treatment systems (DEQ permits the discharge to the environment after treatment). The goal is to make sure that the pipes, pumps and treatment process are of sufficient size, quantity and design to remove sewage without backup or overflows and to treat the sewage in a

manner that public safety is not jeopardized. Part of this process is to maintain proper separation from drinking water supplies. Prior to engineering oversight of sewage collection and treatment unsafe practices resulted in the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people every year from sewage contamination of food and water. In many areas of the world this dire situation continues due to lack of oversight and regulation of sewage handling, treatment and disposal.

Engineering staff also respond to complaints of sewage problems by citizens, provide technical advice and issue civil enforcement actions, where warranted.

Better Health

- Every person in Louisiana (visitor or citizen) generates wastewater, which must be collected, treated and disposed of in a manner which does not endanger the public. The population served is >5.4 Million people/year from a variety of small to large wastewater treatment systems). There would be little economic development or tourism in Louisiana without good sanitation. Protection of the public from sewage contamination is imperative.
- Engineering Services collaborates with a wide range of stakeholders, including: the Federal EPA and CDC, the Louisiana Rural Water Association, the Louisiana Conference on Water Supply and Sewerage, the State Board for Licensing Engineers, the Louisiana Municipal Association, the Police Jury Association, DEQ (joint permit information sharing and joint enforcement), The Public Service Commission (privately-owned wastewater systems).. National collaborations include the: Environmental Council of States and the Water Environment Federation. Engineers work with parish sanitarians and local inspectors to make sure that a good collection and treatment system is in place before homeowners or businesses are allowed to operate.
- Engineering Services staff respond to every citizen complaint, and work hands-on with operators, owners, municipal and parish officials, engineers and developers to ensure that sewage systems are built and operated safely and in compliance with the regulations.

The reason is to keep people from dying in large numbers from sewage contamination. Proper transport and treatment of sewage is paramount to protecting people from illness and death. Good sanitation is the benchmark for public health and one of the primary reasons that DHH was created in Louisiana over 100 years ago. Engineering Services operates under State Authority: L.R.S. 40:4.A(4),(5),(6),(7) (10), (11), 40:4.B; 40:4.11, 40:4.12, 40:1152-1156 and State

Regulation: LAC Title 51, Parts XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XX, and XXI. The state website links are:

- Community Sewerage : <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/?id=237>
- Center for Environmental Health: <http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/?ID=242>
- DHH-OPH Engineering Services:<http://www.dhh.louisiana.gov/offices/?ID=204>

In the past two years, several instances of municipalities and developers installing substandard sewage pipes without a permit were uncovered by DHH staff and the problem was corrected. At least three Public Works directors have lost their position when problems were discovered and brought to the municipalities by staff.