

How long is an inspection or use permit valid?

After an inspection is completed, the homeowner has one year from the inspection date to apply for a use permit. Use permits are valid for one year from their issuance.



Will the process of obtaining a use permit delay closing or prolong the time necessary to get a building permit?

For all systems passing the inspection, the Department is committed to processing a use permit within 3-5 business days upon receipt of a completed Use Permit Application. If system repairs are necessary, those permits will be expedited so as not to delay closing or building permit issuance.



What is an Onsite Wastewater Treatment System, or “OWTS”?

An OWTS is a system for collecting, treating, and dispersing wastewater, commonly referred to as a “septic system.” A typical OWTS treats wastewater through settling in a tank, followed by dispersal to an absorption area where biological activity in the soil treats the wastewater before re-entering ground or surface waters.



How does a typical OWTS work? When wastewater leaves the home, it enters the septic tank where solids sink to the bottom and fats and oils float to the top leaving clear water in the middle. Anaerobic digestion also occurs within the tank to breakdown some of the solids. Then the clear water from the tank, or effluent, flows to the field where it is dispersed underground over a large area. Microbes in the soil break down the remaining biological material in the effluent as it flows through the soil away from the system and into the ground water.

PITKIN COUNTY



Environmental Health

Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) Use Permit Program



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OWTS Use Permits

Program Basics An OWTS use permit is a document issued by Pitkin County Environmental Health Department that provides information on the installation and the operational status of a particular OWTS.

As of July 1st, 2010 an OWTS use permit will be required prior to the sale of a property and prior to issuance of a building permit on a property served by an existing OWTS.



Why was this regulation adopted? The Board of Health approved this regulation because of the environmental and public health impacts of malfunctioning OWTSs, which will be identified through the Use Permit process. Unlike a leaking roof, which only affects the owner of the home, a failing OWTS pollutes surface and groundwater and the effects can be much farther reaching.

What is required to obtain an OWTS Use Permit?

- A completed OWTS Use Permit Application;
- A site plan (11x17) including the general location of the OWTS, buildings, water courses, and other pertinent information;
- Building floor plans (current for a property transaction and proposed for an addition/remodel that does not increase potential bedroom count or water usage of the structure served by the OWTS.
- Inspection report by a Licensed Systems Inspector; and
- Fee (\$100)



List of Licensed Inspectors The current list of licensed systems inspectors is listed on our website: www.aspenpitkin.com/EHNR

Click the Wastewater Treatment tab on the left, then scroll down to “List of Licensed Systems Inspectors”

The requirement to obtain an OWTS use permit will be **waived** under the following conditions:

- If each OWTS on the property has received final approval for an OWTS Construction Permit within the 5 year period preceding the date of closing on the real estate transaction or issuance of building permit;
- Following inspection, a construction permit has been issued by this department for each noncompliant OWTS on the property and the buyer has agreed, in a writing acceptable to this department, to assume the obligations under the permit and to complete the necessary repair/construction within the timeframe dictated by the permit;
- This Department, at its discretion, waives the requirement where warranted by a particular fact or situation such as a buyer that agrees to demolish an existing dwelling and abandon the existing OWTS within a defined time period;
- The valuation of a building permit remodel/addition does not exceed \$30,000 and will not increase the number of bedrooms or proposed water use and is consistent with previously permitted uses; or
- Proposed construction for a detached structure (e.g., a shed or barn) that does not include plumbing (e.g., sink or toilet) that will require an OWTS.