

**Florida Department of Health**  
**6-25-09**

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING SEPTIC ABANDONMENTS**

1. How much does a septic tank abandonment permit cost?  
\$50.00

2. Who can apply for the permit?

A homeowner, licensed septic tank contractor, certified plumber, or registered plumber who is locally approved can apply for an abandonment permit. The septic tank must be pumped out completely by a septic contractor or plumber. Typically, the plumber or septic contractor acts as agent for the owner and completes all the work. However, after the tank is pumped by a septic contractor or plumber, a single family owner occupant of the home may complete the crush and fill of the tank.

3. How long does it take to get an abandonment permit?

The health department strives to issue the permit within 2 working days. Many times they are issued the same day.

4. Where do the plumber/septic contractors go for the permit?

Our health department north county office is located in the Sarasota County complex at 1301 Cattlemen Road, Building A, Sarasota. The health department south office is at 4000 S. Tamiami Trail, Venice, FL.

5. What is the procedure for abandonment of the septic tank?

The tank(s) must first be pumped out by a licensed pumper. Then, the bottom of the tank shall be opened or ruptured, or the entire tank collapsed so as to prevent the tank from retaining water. The tank is then filled with clean sand or other suitable material, and completely covered with soil.

6. Can I use my old tank for irrigation purposes?

There is a brand new (June 2009) procedure that will allow homeowners to convert their old septic tank to a cistern. An abandonment permit is still required. Once the tank is cleaned, sanitized (all wastewater must be pumped by a licensed pumper), and filled with water, the health department shall take samples that are tested at a laboratory. Details are available by calling 861-6133 and asking for the onsite wastewater section at the health department.

7. Is the abandonment work inspected?

After the health department receives a letter or fax from the plumber or septic contractor, the inspector comes out to probe the area. Inspectors check to make sure there is no sewage on the ground in the area and that the tank is filled in properly.

8. If my tank is partially under the foundation of the house, what do I do?

After the tank is pumped out, the tank can be filled with concrete so that the structure is not undermined.

9. If I have a vacant lot in the proposed sewer area and I want to build a house, do I need a septic permit?

If you are building a new house or structure and sewer is expected to be in place and connected to the house within 21 months, you can apply to the building department as central sewer on the application and a septic permit is not required. If sewer is not expected within that time frame, then a septic permit application is required and your application to the building department would need to indicate that.

10. I want to do an addition to my house now but sewer is not expected for a few months. Do I need a septic permit?

If you are currently serviced by septic, and it has been determined that a septic upgrade is required, you will need an engineered septic application/permit package. If sewer becomes available before the expiration of the septic permit (18 months plus 3 months if construction of addition has begun), then the septic installation would not be required.

11. When does the abandonment permit expire?

The permit expires 90 days from the date of issuance.