

Storm Water Pollution

Household Sewage Treatment Systems (HSTS) and the Abatement of Public Health Nuisances



Priorities for Identifying, Repairing and Replacing Failing HSTS and Public Health Risks Caused by Failing HSTS

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About HSTS

Household Sewage Treatment Systems (HSTS) treat household wastes in areas without access to public sewers or where a public sewer system is not feasible. An estimated 25 percent of the U.S. population relies on onsite wastewater systems to treat and dispose of their household waste (USEPA).

Pollution concentrations from failing HSTS discharges could exceed public health nuisance standards.

A number of factors can cause HSTS to fail, including: unsuitable soil conditions, improper design and installation, inadequate maintenance practices, and the age of the system.

How will Franklin County Public Health (FCPH) identify and eliminate failing HSTS to stop storm water pollution and public health nuisances?

If an HSTS is causing a public health nuisance by discharging onto the ground, into a stream, river or lake, or into a storm sewer or ditch, FCPH abates these nuisances by enforcing Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Chapter 3718 and FCPH Regulation 720. These nuisances will be identified by complaints, the annual inspection of HSTS or by a real estate transfer inspection.

FCPH is partnering with the Franklin County Commissioners and 17 Townships to meet the requirements of Franklin County's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Storm Water Permit. These requirements include the abatement of public health nuisances caused by failed or failing HSTS that discharge into a storm sewer or ditches regulated under the permit. These nuisances will be identified using the prioritized approach described inside this brochure.

For a complete definition of a public health nuisance or to see a copy of ORC Chapter 3718 or FCPH Regulation 720 visit www.myfcph.org.

Priority 1:

If sanitary sewer is available and accessible, homeowners will be ordered to abandon their household sewage system and connect to the sanitary sewer. Whether the system is operating correctly or not, the homeowner will be required to connect.

Priority 2:

Identify HSTS that are not permitted by FCPH and are discharging into a storm sewer or ditch owned and operated by the County or Townships - also known as the Municipal Separate Storm Systems (MS4). FCPH will enforce the removal of any unpermitted HSTS from the MS4. This may involve replacing existing discharging systems with a soil absorption system. If a soil absorption system is not feasible then the order will require replacing the HSTS with a new HSTS covered under an Ohio EPA (OEPA) general NPDES permit.

Priority 3:

Identify HSTS that are discharging into the MS4 which have an "obvious" storm sewer outfall ranking. If a storm sewer discharge is ranked "obvious" (meaning there has been verified evidence of sewage pollution), FCPH will determine if there is a failed HSTS causing the pollution and the homeowner(s) will be ordered to abate the nuisance and comply with ORC 3718. This may involve replacing existing discharging systems with a soil absorption system. If a soil absorption system is not feasible then the order will require replacing the HSTS with a new HSTS covered under an OEPA general NPDES permit.

Priority 4:

Identify HSTS that are discharging into the MS4 which have a "suspicious" storm sewer outfall ranking. If a storm sewer discharge is ranked "suspicious" (meaning there have been identified conditions that could be caused by contamination from a failing HSTS), FCPH will determine if there is a failed HSTS causing the pollution and the homeowner(s) will be ordered to abate the nuisance and comply with ORC 3718. This may involve replacing existing discharging systems with a soil absorption system. If a soil absorption system is not feasible then the order will require replacing the HSTS with a new HSTS covered under an OEPA general NPDES permit.

Priority 5:

Identify HSTS that are indirectly discharging into an MS4. If the HSTS is causing a public health nuisance, FCPH will order any homeowner(s) to abate the nuisance and comply with ORC 3718. This may involve replacing existing discharging systems with a soil absorption system. If a soil absorption system is not feasible then the order will require replacing the HSTS with a new HSTS covered under an OEPA general NPDES permit.

Diagram of Direct and Indirect Discharge



