Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Septage Operator Certification Program

Septage Operator Servicing Handbook and Study Guide for Grade T Certification

Revised January 2026

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1.0 Preface

1.1 Overview

The "Septage Operator Handbook and Study Guide for Grade T Certification" study guide is an important resource for operators preparing for the "Grade T" septage operator certification exam. A Grade T operator is certified to conduct all aspects of septage servicing except the land application of septage. To qualify for certification as a Grade T operator, a person shall pass the Grade T examination (reference s. NR 114.17(1)(a), Wis. Adm. Code).

IMPORTANT: Individuals taking the "Grade L" operator exam will need to understand the concepts outlined in the "Septage Operator Handbook and Study Guide for Grade L Operators" study guide. A Grade L operator is certified to conduct all aspects of septage servicing including the land application of septage. To qualify for certification as a Grade L operator, a person shall pass the Grade L examination (reference s. NR 114.17(1)(b), Wis. Adm. Code).

Every septage operator must demonstrate sufficient knowledge of the principles underlying septage servicing and disposal to:

- Protect public health from unsanitary and unhealthful practices and conditions,
- Protect surface waters and groundwaters of the state from contamination by septage (reference s. NR 113.01, Wis. Adm. Code), and
- Ensure the highest industry standards.

The purpose of this handbook and study guide is to present practical information on the servicing, transport, storage, and disposal (land application, POTW, etc.) of septage. Material is presented in a concise, recommendation-oriented format for:

- Aspiring septage operators preparing to take the septage exam, and
- Reference material for existing operator, master operators, and managers of septage storage facilities.

This document is arranged by different sections. Each section consists of key informational concepts needed to know for the operator certification exams. This study guide also serves as a septage primer that can be used as a reference on the subject. Any diagrams, pictures, or references included in this study guide are included for informational purposes and do not constitute endorsement of any sources by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (hereafter referred to as DNR or department). Lastly, the material contained should be used as a study supplement to Wisconsin Administration Code chapters NR 113 and NR 114.

1.1 Exam Preparation

When preparing for the operator certification exam, the department recommends the following actions:

- **Study the material!** Review chs. NR 113 and NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code. Review the "Septage Operator Handbook and Study Guide for Grade T Operators." Make sure that all concepts are fully understood and committed to memory.
- **Learn with others**! Take the septage master operator class, attend DNR training workshops, attend WLWCA conferences and training workshops, etc. to improve understanding and knowledge of the key subject.
- **Learn even more!** For an even greater understanding and knowledge of the subjects and certification requirements, the department recommends reviewing the below additional sources:
    - Wisconsin DNR "Septage Business License Requirements" webpage,
    - Wisconsin DNR "Septage Servicing Operator Certification" webpage,
    - Wisconsin DNR "Operator Certification" webpage,
    - Wisconsin DNR "Plan Review Procedures for Large Septage Storage Facilities" webpage,
    - Wisconsin DNR "Storage of Domestic Septage" WPDES general permit webpage,
    - US EPA "Guide to Septage Treatment and Disposal," and
    - US EPA 40 CFR 503.
- **Ask for help!** Contact your regional DNR septage coordinator (email or phone) to ask any septage-related questions. Contact the DNR Septage Certification coordinator for any septage operator-related questions.

1.2 Exam Application

The DNR certification exams contain multiple choice questions that offer four answer choices from which you are to choose the correct, or best answer. There is only one best answer.

Currently, DNR offers in-person exams at various locations across the State of Wisconsin. In the future, DNR may consider computer-based testing options. For up-to-date information, visit the DNR Operator Certification "Exams" webpage.

Generally, an applicant should follow the below steps to register for an exam:

1. Complete "Septage Service Operator Certification Exam Application" (form 3400-841). Note: This application can be found on the DNR Operator Certification "Exams" webpage.
2. Exam application forms and fees may only be submitted by mail, and must be postmarked no later than four weeks prior to the requested exam date.
3. Exam application fees can be paid for by check, money order, or cash. Please write all checks to "Wisconsin DNR."
4. Submit the completed exam application and fee(s) to the mailing address listed on the DNR "Septage Servicing Operator Certification" webpage.
5. The DNR Operator Certification Program will review and process complete exam applications within 10 business days of receipt.

1.2 Testing Strategies

Consider the following strategies during the septage operator exam:

- **Pace yourself!** It is important to pace yourself so that you will not spend too much time on one question. If you don't readily know the answer, skip the question, and return to it later. Applicants will have up to 3 hours to take the exam, although most operators have completed the exam within 60 minutes.
- **Read each question carefully.** It important that you understand what each question is asking. Some questions may require you to go through more than one step to find the correct answer. Some questions can be answered quickly based on your acquired knowledge.
- **Answer the easy questions first.** The best strategy for taking the exam is to answer the easy questions and skip the questions you find difficult. After answering all the easy questions, go back and answer the more difficult questions.
- **Use logic to answer difficult questions.** When you return to the more difficult questions, try to use logic to eliminate incorrect answers to a question. Compare the answer choices to each other and note how they differ. Such differences may provide clues as to what the question requires. Eliminate as many incorrect answers as you can, then make an educated guess from the remaining answers.
- **Review your work!** If there is time left after you have answered every question in an exam, go back and check your work in that exam.
- **Answer every question!** Your score on the exam will be based on the number of questions that you answered correctly. Make sure you answer all the questions—even if you have to guess. A question that is missing an answer is marked wrong and will count against your score.
- **Have a positive mindset!** Although what you know will determine how well you do on the exam, your attitudes, emotions, and physical state may also influence your performance. The following tips will help you do your best on the exam.
    - Be confident in your ability to do well on the exam,
    - Be prepared to work hard on the exam,
    - Know what to expect on test day,
    - Prepare well in advance of the exam,
    - Get plenty of rest the night before the test,
    - Plan to arrive one-half hour before test time,
    - Dress comfortably, and
    - Bring your photo ID (driver's license), #2 pencils, and a calculator. *Note: Cellphones are not permitted to be on and may not be used as your calculator.*

1.3 American Disabilities Act (ADA) and Hardship Requests

If an exam applicant requires ADA accommodations or any other legitimate, documented reason for being unable to complete an exam at a larger-group exam session, please contact the Operator

Certification coordinator to request a one-person session at DNROpCert@wisconsin.gov with the subject line "Hardship exam session request - [*YOUR LAST NAME*]".

2.0 Key Definitions (Grade T Exam)

IMPORTANT: This section includes key definitions for operators to reference when reviewing for the "Grade T" septage operator exam. The below list is not a comprehensive list of definitions. Operators should refer to ss. NR 113.03 and NR 114.152, Wis. Adm. Code for a complete list of definitions.

1. Business: any individual, partnership, corporation, or body politic that does servicing (referenced from s. NR 113.03(8), Wis. Adm. Code).

2. Certified operator: any person servicing private sewage systems such as septic and holding tanks, dosing chambers, grease interceptors, seepage beds, seepage pits, seepage trenches, distribution cells, privies, or portable restrooms who holds a valid Wisconsin septage servicing operator's certification under ch. NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code (referenced from s. NR 113.03(9), Wis. Adm. Code).

    a. Grade T operator: an operator certified to conduct all aspects of septage servicing except the land application of septage. To qualify for certification as a grade T operator, a person shall pass the grade T examination (referenced from s. NR 114.17(1)(a), Wis. Adm. Code).

    b. Grade L operator: an operator certified to conduct all aspects of septage servicing including the land application of septage. To qualify for certification as a grade L operator, a person shall pass the grade L examination (referenced from s. NR 114.17(1)(b), Wis. Adm. Code).

3. Department: the department of natural resources (referenced from s. NR 113.03(12), Wis. Adm. Code).

4. Disposal: the controlled discharge of septage to a publicly owned treatment works (POTW), treatment or storage lagoon, or to an agricultural field for the purpose of recycling nutrients back into the environment (referenced from s. NR 113.03(13), Wis. Adm. Code).

5. Grade: means the classification assigned to a person under s. NR 114.17, Wis. Adm. Code (referenced from s. NR 114.153(4), Wis. Adm. Code).

6. Grade T master operator: operator that may conduct all aspects of septage servicing except land application and is eligible to be an operator-in-charge for a business that does not land apply (referenced from ss. NR 114.17 and NR 114.18, Wis. Adm. Code).

7. Grade L master operator: operator that may conduct all aspects of septage servicing including land application and is eligible to be an operator-in-charge for a business that land applies (referenced from ss. NR 114.17 and NR 114.18, Wis. Adm. Code).

8. Grease interceptor (aka grease trap): a watertight receptacle designed to intercept and retain grease or fatty substances contained in kitchen and other food wastes (referenced from s. NR 113.03(21), Wis. Adm. Code). Grease interceptor and grease trap mean the same thing. This term should not be confused with a receptacle for grease collected from fryers (and similar cooking processes) and retained in onsite containers for removal/reuse.

    a. Industrial/process grease interceptor (aka food processing or manufacturing grease): a watertight receptacle designed to intercept and retain grease connected through process piping that is completely separate from sanitary plumbing.

    b. Sanitary grease interceptor: a watertight receptacle connected to sanitary plumbing and designed to intercept and retain grease from sources including but not limited to, kitchens and restaurants. Sanitary grease contains human pathogens and is subject to ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code.

9. Inspection: comprehensive review of the septage business to determine compliance with chs. NR 113 and NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code. During each septage inspection, department staff inspect septage vehicle(s) and equipment, inspect storage units (if applicable), review landspreading practices (if applicable), review spill plan and clean-up procedures, review service records and annual reports, and verify proper operator certification.

10. Holding tank: an approved watertight receptacle for the collection and holding of wastewater or sewage.

    a. Domestic holding tank: a watertight receptacle for the collection and holding of domestic wastewater [See definition of "wastewater-domestic" below]. Typically regulated under the authority of ch. 145, Wis. Stats. (referenced from s. NR 113.03(26), Wis. Adm. Code). *Note: This type is system may also be referred to as a "holding tank POWTS" which is defined as a holding tank component of a POWTS used for the collection and holding of sewage (referenced from s. NR 113.03(26m), Wis. Adm. Code).*

    b. Nondomestic or mixed (domestic + nondomestic) holding tank: a watertight receptacle for the collection and holding of nondomestic wastewaters or a mix of domestic/nondomestic wastewaters [See definition of "wastewater-nondomestic" below]. Typically regulated under the authority of chs. 281 and 283, Wis. Stats.

11. Log books and invoice record systems: a record keeping system that utilizes log books, invoice records, or a combination of both (referenced from s. NR 113.03(33m), Wis. Adm. Code).

12. Management plan: a plan for optimizing land application of septage and demonstrating compliance with the requirements of this chapter [ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code] and may

include standard operating procedures for various processes or procedures (referenced from s. NR 113.03(31m), Wis. Adm. Code).

13. Master operator: a certified operator who has met the requirements under s. NR 114.18(2), Wis. Adm. Code and holds a valid Wisconsin master operator certification for servicing septage (referenced from s. NR 113.03(34h), Wis. Adm. Code).

14. Non-holding tank POWTS: POWTS or POWTS components excluding a holding tank (referenced from s. NR 113.03(34t), Wis. Adm. Code).

15. Nuisance: any source of filth or probable cause of sickness not in compliance with this rule (referenced from s. NR 113.03(35), Wis. Adm. Code).

16. Operator-in-charge (or "OIC"): the master operator who has been designated by the owner to be responsible for the operation of a septage servicing business (referenced from s. NR 113.03(35r), Wis. Adm. Code).

17. Operator-in-training (or "OIT"): a person who has been properly registered as an operator-in-training with the department by the operator-in-charge (referenced from s. NR 114.153(6), Wis. Adm. Code).

18. Portable restroom: fixtures, incorporating holding tank facilities, designed to directly receive human excrement. Portable restrooms are self-contained units, may be designed for one or more person's use at a given time and are readily transportable (referenced in s. NR 113.03(41), Wis. Adm. Code).

19. Portable restroom servicing assistant (or "PRSA"): means a person who services portable restrooms under the supervision of the operator-in-charge (referenced in s. NR 114.153(8), Wis. Adm. Code).

20. Privy: an enclosed nonportable toilet into which human wastes not carried by water are deposited to a subsurface storage chamber that may or may not be watertight. This includes all of the following:

    a. Pit privy for which a cavity in the ground is constructed for toilet uses and receives human excrement to be partially absorbed directly by the surrounding soil.

    b. Vault privy in which human excrement is stored for decomposition and periodic servicing (referenced from s. NR 113.03(43), Wis. Adm. Code).

21. Publicly owned (wastewater) treatment works: means a treatment works which is owned by a municipality and any sewers that convey wastewater to such a treatment works. This definition includes any devices or systems used by a municipality in the storage, treatment, recycling, and reclamation of municipal sewage or liquid industrial wastes. The term also means the municipality or local unit of government which has jurisdiction over the indirect

discharges to, and the discharges from, such a treatment works (referenced from s. NR 211.03(11), Wis. Adm. Code).

22. Septage: means the scum, liquid, sludge, or other waste in any of the following:

    a. A septic or holding tank, dosing chamber, grease interceptor, seepage bed, seepage pit, seepage trench, distribution cell, or other component of private onsite wastewater treatment systems.

    b. A privy or portable restroom (referenced s. NR 113.03(55), Wis. Adm. Code).

    Note: This does not include non-domestic wastewater/septage (non-domestic examples include, but are not limited to process grease, car wash waste, catch basin waste, etc.).

23. Septic tank: means a tank which receives and partially treats sewage through processes of sedimentation, oxidation, flotation and bacterial action so as to separate solids from the liquid in the sewage and discharges the liquid to a soil absorption system (referenced from s. NR 113.03(56), Wis. Adm. Code).

24. Service shop: a shop from which septage servicing is dispatched (referenced from s. NR 113.03(56m), Wis. Adm. Code).

25. Service (or "servicing"): act of removing the scum, liquid, sludge, or other wastes from a POWTS such as septic or holding tanks, dosing chambers, grease interceptors, seepage beds, seepage pits, distribution cells, seepage trenches, privies, or portable restrooms and properly disposing or recycling of the contents as provide in this chapter (referenced from s. NR 113.03(57), Wis. Adm. Code).

26. Spill: the uncontrolled discharge, dumping, or leaking of any septage or any of its constituents that may be emitted into the air, be discharged into any waters of the state, or otherwise enter the environment (referenced from s. NR 113.03(65), Wis. Adm. Code).

27. Standard Operating Procedure (or "SOP"): a set of step-by-step instructions compiled by a business to help workers carry out complex routine operations (referenced from s. NR 113.03(65m), Wis. Adm. Code).

28. Violation: means a failure to comply with any provision from ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code (referenced from sub. NR 113.03(70), Wis. Adm. Code.

29. Wastewater-Domestic: wastewater originating solely from human and domestic activities such as sanitary, bath, laundry, dishwashing, garbage disposal, and the cleaning of domestic areas or utensils. Wastewater from restaurants is synonymous with domestic wastewater. [clarified pursuant to DSPS (Dept. Commerce) and DNR Memo of Understanding dated December 16, 1999].

30. Wastewater-Non-Domestic: includes, but is not limited to, wastes collected from non-residential garages used for storage, maintenance, or washing of motor vehicles, commercial food processing, commercial laundromats, animal shelters or kennels, animal rendering, metal fabricating, electronic component manufacturing, chemical manufacturing, milk houses, and other industrial and commercial process water. [clarified pursuant to DSPS (Dept. Commerce) and DNR Memo of Understanding dated December 16, 1999].

    Note: Nondomestic wastewater may include a mix of nondomestic and domestic wastes.

31. Wisconsin sanitary license: a license to service private sewage systems, such as septic and holding tanks, dosing chambers, grease interceptors, seepage beds, seepage pits, seepage trenches, distribution cells, privies, or portable restrooms, issued by the department under s. 281.48 (3), Wis. Stats. (referenced from s. NR 113.03(74), Wis. Adm. Code).

3.0 Acronyms

1. CFR: Code of Federal Regulations
2. DNR: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (also known as "department")
3. DOJ: Wisconsin Department of Justice
4. DSPS: Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services (formerly a part of the Department of Commerce)
5. GPS: Global Positioning System
6. OIC: Operator-in-Charge
7. OIT: Operator-in-Training
8. POTW: Publicly Owned Treatment Works
9. POWTS: Private On-Site Wastewater Treatment System
10. PRSA: Portable restroom servicing assistant
11. NON: Notice of Noncompliance
12. NOV: Notice of Violation
13. NRCS: Natural Resources Conservation Service
14. SOP: Standard Operating Procedure

15. SU: Standard Units

16. US EPA: United States Environmental Protection Agency

17. VAR: Vector Attraction Reduction

18. WLWCA: Wisconsin Liquid Waste Carriers Association

19. WPDES: Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System

20. WWTF: Wastewater Treatment Facility

4.0 Septage Business Overview

4.1 Overview

All septage businesses in the State of Wisconsin that service and/or dispose of septage (waste from septic tanks, holding tanks, sanitary grease interceptors, portable restrooms, privies, etc.) shall be licensed pursuant to ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code. Each vehicle used for servicing and transport of septage shall be inspected and properly registered pursuant to s. NR 113.06, Wis. Adm. Code. Every business shall comply with the septage disposal requirements specified under s. NR 113.07, Wis. Adm. Code.

Each septage business must designate an operator-in-charge (OIC). All individuals servicing septage shall be properly certified under the following designations: operator-in-training (OIT), certified septage operator, and/or master operator pursuant to ch. NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code. A certification exemption is allowed for portable restroom servicing assistants (PRSAs). *Note: PRSAs must work under the direction of the OIC and are limited to only servicing portable restrooms and cannot landspread septage.*

Septage businesses must comply with the following Wisconsin Administrative Codes:

- Chapter NR 113, Wisconsin Administrative Code**,** and
- Chapter NR 114, Wisconsin Administrative Code**.**

The purposes of ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code, include:

- Establishing standards for servicing septage (waste from septic tanks, holding tanks, sanitary grease interceptors, portable restrooms, etc.),
- Allowing the use and disposal of wastewaters from these sources,
- Protecting public health from unsanitary and unhealthful practices, and
- Protecting surface waters and groundwaters of the state (reference: s. NR 113.01, Wis. Adm. Code).

The purpose of ch. NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code (specifically subchapter II) is to establish rules for the certification of septage servicing operators pursuant to s. 281.17(3), Wis. Stats. (reference: s. NR 114.151, Wis. Adm. Code).

4.2 United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Regulation

The USEPA also regulates the land application of domestic septage through 40 CFR 503. Nearly all of the federal requirements are included in ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code, making compliance easier for Wisconsin septage businesses. These include requirements such as pathogen control, vector attraction reduction, and nitrogen application limitations. Even though 40 CFR 503 regulates septage as a sewage sludge, septage is afforded many exemptions primarily for disposal. However, septage servicing and disposal require extensive daily logs, and land application activities require certified statements declaring disposal meets state and federal requirements.

4.3 Septage Servicing and Disposal

Septage "servicing" is the act of removing the scum, liquid, sludge, or other wastes from a private onsite wastewater treatment system ("POWTS") such as septic or holding tanks, dosing chambers, grease interceptors, seepage beds, seepage pits, distribution cells, seepage trenches, privies, or portable restrooms and properly disposing or recycling of the contents as provided in ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code (referenced from s. NR 113.03(57), Wis. Adm. Code).

Common disposal options for septage include:

- Disposal at a publicly owned wastewater treatment works (POTWs) or wastewater treatment facilities (WWTFs),
- Disposal at a facility approved to receive and/or treat septage (examples: WPDES permitted septage storage facility, Wisconsin licensed septage business with approved septage storage, and WPDES permitted contract haulers), and
- Land application of septage on department-approved fields.

IMPORTANT: Every business engaged in servicing or authorizing servicing shall comply with the disposal of septage requirements specified under s. NR 113.07, Wis. Adm. Code. These requirements are further detailed in subsequent sections of this handbook.

5.0 Types of Septage Systems

5.1 Overview

Chapter NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code regulates the servicing of "septage." Septage is the scum, liquid, sludge, or other wastes from:

- Septic tanks,
- Holding tanks,
- Dosing chambers,
- Grease interceptors,

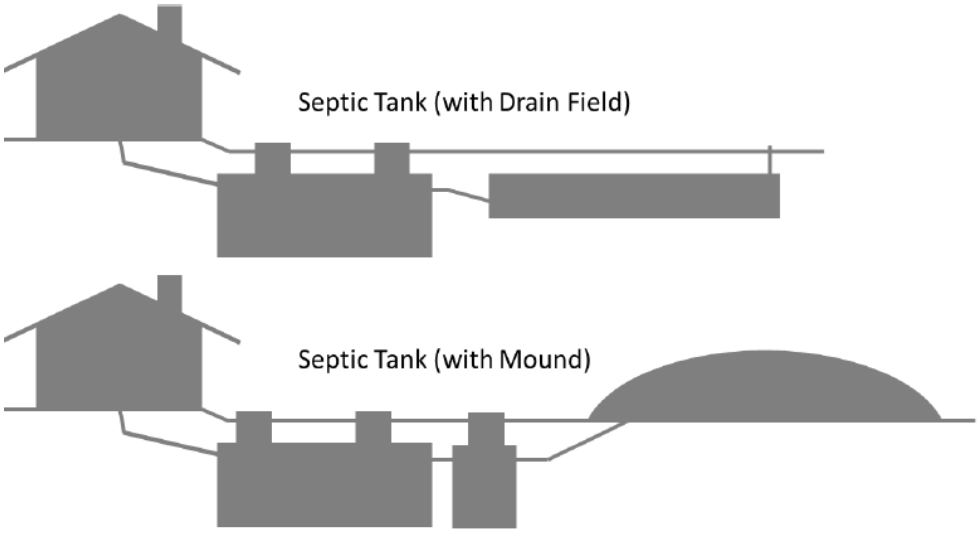
- Seepage beds,
- Seepage pits,
- Seepage trenches,
- Distribution cells,
- Other components of private onsite wastewater treatment systems (or POWTSs),
- Privies, and
- Portable restrooms (reference s. NR 113.03(55), Wis. Adm. Code)

5.2 Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems

Private onsite wastewater treatment systems (POWTS) generate the majority of septage that requires disposal in Wisconsin. POWTS are used to treat and disperse of relatively small volumes of wastewater, usually from residences and businesses in suburban and rural locations not served by a public (centralized) sewer system.

Septic systems are underground wastewater treatment structures that use a combination of natural and technological processes to treat wastewater from household plumbing produced by bathrooms, showers, kitchen drains and laundry. The process typically begins with solids settling within the septic tank and ends with wastewater treatment in the soil via the drain field. The benefits of POWTSs include:

- **Public health benefits.** Proper use of septic systems reduces the risk of disease transmission and human exposure to pathogens, which can occur through drinking water and surface water.
- **Environmental benefits**. POWTS treatment removes pollution from surface water, recharges groundwater, and replenishes aquifers.
- **Economic benefits.** POWTS help communities reduce large infrastructure and energy costs to collect and treat wastewater.



Household POWTS are designed to store and/or treat domestic wastewater. In October 2017, all septic systems in Wisconsin were required to be identified and documented. At the beginning of 2022, there were 778,451 installed septic systems in Wisconsin; 13,923 were installed in 2020 and 14,712 were installed in 2021 (personal communication, B. Johnson, DSPS, February 2023).

POWTS typically incorporate two separate components:

1. An aerobic treatment tank where wastewater is treated physically by settling and flotation, biologically with anaerobic treatment, and limited chemical processes. Aerobic treatment requires oxygen to break down waste materials, usually with the help of microorganisms. The solids that settle at the bottom of the tank are referred to as sludge, while the floatable materials include greases, oils, and scum.
2. Aerobic treatment processes are used to treat the liquid (or effluent) leaving the septic tank as it passes through a natural or engineered soil profile.

Septic tanks are designed to accumulate sludge and scum. These tanks must be emptied periodically. As the sludge and scum accumulate, they lower the capacity of the tank to hold wastewater long enough for anaerobic decomposition to occur. If this happens, wastewater is not adequately treated. The frequency of pumping depends on the size of the tank and the loading to it. Typically, a single family residential septic tank should be pumped once every two to three years. When the tank is emptied, the sludge, scum, and other wastewaters in the tank are referred to as septage or septic tank waste.

The liquid wastewater that flows out of the septic tank is only partially treated and receives additional treatment as it is released and absorbed into the soil. It is illegal for a septic tank to discharge directly to the land surface or to surface waters.

There are four common types of soil absorption systems:

1. **Trench System.** Many absorption fields consist of a series of trenches. Each trench has a distribution pipe near the bottom surrounded by a bed of gravel. The wastewater flows by gravity through the distribution pipes and into the gravel bed. From the gravel it is absorbed into the soil.

2. **Seepage Bed System (AKA drain field).** A seepage bed is similar to a trench system except instead of trenches the distribution pipes are laid in a bed of gravel in a large square or rectangular area. The bed of gravel is covered with a one-to-three-foot layer of soil. The wastewater seeps through the gravel and is absorbed into the soil.

3. **Pit System.** A pit system is commonly called a drywell. It consists of a deep excavation with the sides of the excavation lined with blocks or some type of porous material. The wastewater seeps into the soil on the bottom or sides of the pit. Many of these systems are still in use in Wisconsin, but they are generally not as desirable as the other three types of systems. They are more likely to fail, and they do not provide as much protection to groundwater.

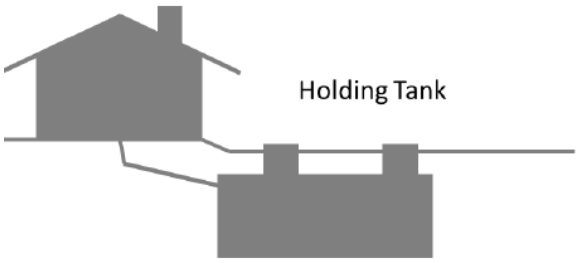
4. **Mound System.** A mound system is the newest method of soil absorption. It consists of built-up areas of sandy material with the distribution pipes near the base of the mound. They allow septic systems to function on soils that are not suitable for the other three types of absorption systems. Mound systems require a pump to lift the wastewater from the septic tank to the distribution pipes in the mound**.**

5.3 Holding Tanks POWTS

A holding tank is an approved watertight receptacle for the collection and holding of wastewater or sewage. Holding tanks may contain domestic or nondomestic wastes.

- A domestic holding tank is a watertight receptacle for the collection and holding of domestic wastewater. Typically regulated under the authority of ch. 145, Wis. Stats. (referenced from s. NR 113.03(26), Wis. Adm. Code). *Note: This type is system may also be referred to as a "holding tank POWTS" which is defined as a holding tank component of a POWTS used for the collection and holding of sewage (referenced from s. NR 113.03(26m), Wis. Adm. Code).*

- A nondomestic or mixed (domestic + nondomestic) holding tank is a watertight receptacle for the collection and holding of nondomestic wastewaters or a mix of domestic/nondomestic wastewaters Typically regulated under the authority of chs. 281 and 283, Wis. Stats. Examples of nondomestic wastewaters include, but are not limited to cheese processing wastewater, vegetable processing wastewaters, and car wash waters).



5.4 Servicing Equipment for Septic and Holding Tanks

The two most common types of pumps used on pumper trucks are vacuum and centrifugal.

The vacuum pump system works by having an air pump mounted on the truck's tank to pump air out of the tank. The septage is drawn out of the septic or holding tank by the vacuum in the tank truck. Advantages of the vacuum system are: the liquid does not have to flow through the pump, the system is less likely to freeze in winter, few mechanical issues, and the operator can use

pressure when unloading. A disadvantage is that a vacuum system requires a heavy duty pressure resistant tank. A vacuum pump is the most commonly used system.

The centrifugal pump system works by having a rotor spinning at high speed to move the liquid. Centrifugal pump systems can clog and are subject to wear or damage by grit. A centrifugal pump is more likely to have mechanical issues compared to a vacuum pump. The chance for damage increases because the liquid moves through the pump rather than just through the hose.

Both the vacuum and centrifugal pumps have a maximum suction lift of approximately 27 feet. For higher lifts, a submersible pump is placed directly in the septage to pump into the pumper truck**.**

5.5 Grease Interceptors

A grease interceptor (aka grease trap) is a watertight receptacle designed to intercept and retain grease or fatty substances contained in kitchen and other food wastes (referenced from s. NR 113.03(21), Wis. Adm. Code). Grease interceptor and grease trap mean the same thing. This term should not be confused with a receptacle for grease collected from fryers (and similar cooking processes) and retained in onsite containers for removal/reuse.

There are two types of grease interceptors:

- A sanitary grease interceptor is a watertight receptacle connected to sanitary plumbing and designed to intercept and retain grease from sources including but not limited to, kitchens and restaurants. Sanitary grease contains human pathogens and is subject to ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code. A sanitary grease interceptor must be serviced by a licensed septage business.

- An industrial/process grease interceptor (aka food processing or manufacturing grease) is a watertight receptacle designed to intercept and retain grease connected through process piping that is completely separate from sanitary plumbing. If process grease is landspread, then it is classified as an "industrial sludge" under ch. NR 214, Wis. Adm. Code. An industrial/process interceptor does not need to be serviced by a licensed septage business.

5.6 Portable Restrooms and Privies

Portable restrooms include fixtures, incorporating holding tank facilities, designed to directly receive human excrement. Portable restrooms are self-contained units, may be designed for one or more person's use at a given time and are readily transportable (referenced in s. NR 113.03(41), Wis. Adm. Code).

Privies are enclosed nonportable toilets into which human wastes not carried by water are deposited to a subsurface storage chamber that may or may not be watertight. This includes all of the following:

a. Pit privy for which a cavity in the ground is constructed for toilet uses and receives human excrement to be partially absorbed directly by the surrounding soil.
b. Vault privy in which human excrement is stored for decomposition and periodic servicing (referenced from s. NR 113.03(43), Wis. Adm. Code).

5.7 Staff Safety

Septic Tank Malfunctions

Septic tanks can have structural failures, such as cracked or broken walls, which could cause septage leaks into the soil without adequate treatment. For example, if groundwater seeps in through cracks it can hydraulically overload the system. Broken baffles can also lead to structural failure. When the baffles are broken, the wastewater can flow directly across the surface of the liquid in the tank without being held for treatment. This means inadequately treated wastewater reaches the distribution system and can cause failure of the absorption system. When an outlet baffle is broken, solids are more likely to flow out of the tank and into the absorption area, causing clogging of the soil and early failure of the system.

Although septic tanks malfunction at times, it is usually the distribution system that fails, and not the tank itself. A non-structural type of failure is when a septic tank is not emptied often enough and solids accumulate, filling the tank. When this happens, the wastewater is not held in the tank and inadequately treated wastewater reaches the absorption system. This can lead to early failure of the absorption system.

Byproducts of anaerobic decomposition can be methane gas and hydrogen sulfide gas. Because methane and hydrogen sulfide gases are very toxic, it is important to follow strict safety precautions when working around septic tanks.

Onsite sewage installations may require minor repairs. Replacement or repair of manhole risers and covers; replacement or repair of distribution boxes (“D-Box”); and replacement of septic tank baffles are allowable for septic pumpers. All other replacement or repair work must be done by a properly licensed plumber.

The most common type of failure of an absorption system is when the system loses its ability to accept wastewater as fast as it is discharged from the septic tank. This results in ponding in the absorption system, and in severe cases, ponding on the surface or backup of sewers into the house. This kind of hydraulic failure can be caused by either saturated soil conditions or clogging of the soil surface where the treated wastewater is absorbed into the soil.

Confined Space Entry

Septic tanks and holding tanks are both considered confined spaces because they have limited openings for entry and exit, and have little natural ventilation. It is possible for toxic gases to be present in lethal concentrations because of the anaerobic decomposition of wastewater and the lack of natural ventilation. Entry into a confined space should only be done in accordance with procedures that are approved by the Department of Workforce Development. These include:

- Continuous monitoring of the air with a tri-gas meter that will simultaneously test for oxygen, hydrogen sulfide and combustible gases and immediately signal when the atmosphere falls outside the air quality limits.
- Leaving the confined space immediately if the atmosphere falls outside any of the air quality limits.
- Not substituting forced ventilation in place of monitoring devices.
- The use of a harness, lifeline, and winch for emergency extraction of personnel.
- Having someone remain outside the confined space area to assist in case of an emergency.

Hazardous or Toxic Wastes

Certified and master septage servicing operators working for a licensed septage business under chs. NR 113 and NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code, are authorized to haul septage but not to transport and/or dispose of hazardous wastes.

- Toxic or hazardous wastes that are land applied on a field may contaminate the site.
- Toxic or hazardous wastes that are disposed at a wastewater treatment plant may cause serious problems at the plant.

Operators should be particularly careful about hauling any waste from a site that is known to handle, store, manufacture, or sell any type of materials that are toxic or hazardous. This could include service stations, garages, metal finishing plants, plating plants, facilities that handle pesticides, factories using solvents, or any chemical manufacturing or processing facilities. If there is any doubt, it is better to refuse the business than to be part of a toxic or hazardous contamination.

5.8 Staff Safety Equipment

Key safety gear items for septage operators should include:

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Operators should wear safety gloves, goggles or face shields, hearing protection, and steel-toed boots.

- First Aid Kits. Each septage servicing vehicle and service shop should have a fully stocked first aid kit on had to ensure quick response to minor injuries.

5.9 Recommended Immunizations

Hauling septage is not considered a high-risk occupation. However, septage does contain disease causing organisms. It is important for haulers to follow certain personal safety precautions. Physicians recommend being immunized for tetanus with booster every ten years. After five years a booster is recommended if a person is cut or wounded. Physicians also recommend being immunized for poliomyelitis.

6.0 Septage Business License Requirements

6.1 Overview

Per s. NR 113.05(1), Wis. Adm. Code, every business, before engaging in septage servicing in this state, shall submit an application on forms prepared by the department. The application shall clearly identify the owner and legal entity applying for the septage license. The application shall designate an operator-in-charge (OIC) for the business in accordance with ch. NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code. The OIC shall possess a valid master operator certification for the duration of the business license period. License fees shall accompany each license application.

To apply for a new septage business license, the applicant must complete the following items:

- Designate a certified master operator as the operator-in-charge;
- Submit a *"Septage Servicing New Business License Application"* (form 3400-020 AKA "020 form");
- Submit a *"Social Security Number/FEIN Collection Request"* (form 9400-058);
- Submit a *"Wisconsin Septage Servicing Licensee Vehicle Inspection Report"* (form 3400-019 AKA "019 form") for each vehicle the owner or operator intends to utilize under the proposed septage license; and
- Mail all above documents (including a check with appropriate fees) to DNR Septage Certification.

IMPORTANT: All of the below steps must be completed prior to servicing septage. Failure to complete these steps prior to septage servicing may result in departmental stepped enforcement pursuant to ss. NR 113.14 and NR 114.245, Wis. Adm. Code. See the "*Septage Enforcement*" tab on the "*Septage Business License Requirements*" webpage for additional information.

6.2 Designate Operator-in-Charge (OIC)

Each septage business must designate a certified master operator as the operator-in-charge (OIC) for the business per ss. NR 113.05(1)(a) and NR 114.18(1), Wis. Adm. Code. The OIC is the individual designated by the owner to be directly responsible for the operation of the septage business. The responsibilities of the OIC include, but are not limited to:

- Serving as the primary contact for department staff,

- Maintaining operator records, submitting operator-in-training (OIT) requests, and coordinating operator renewals,
- Ensuring staff are properly trained to service and dispose of septage,
- Inspecting and maintaining septage vehicles,
- Drafting standard operating procedures (SOPs), spill plans and management plans,
- Reviewing daily log and invoice records systems,
- Overseeing land application practices, and
- Certifying "Other Methods of Disposal or Distribution Reports" and "Annual Land Application Reports" (forms 3400-052 and 3400-055, respectively).

The licensed septage business may only perform aspects corresponding to their OIC "grade" designation.

- A "grade T" master operator may conduct all aspects of septage servicing except land application of septage (reference s. NR 114.17(1)(a), Wis. Adm. Code).
- A "grade L" master operator may conduct all aspects of septage servicing including land application of septage (reference s. NR 114.17(1)(b), Wis. Adm. Code).

IMPORTANT: It is not a requirement that the business owner be a certified operator (or certified master operator). However, the business owner must designate a properly certified OIC (individual with an active master operator license "grade T" or "grade L") before a septage business license is issued.

6.3 Complete Form 3400-020 ("Septage Servicing New Business Application")

The business must submit a complete *"Septage Servicing New Business License Application"* (form 3400-020). This step must be completed before finalizing vehicle inspection reports.

6.4 Complete Form 9400-054 ("Social Security Number/FEIN Collection Request"

The business must submit a complete *"Social Security Number/Federal Employment Identification Number (FEIN) Collection Request"* (form 9400-058). The purpose of collecting a FEIN number is to determine whether the license applicant is delinquent in court-ordered child or family support payments or delinquent in paying Wisconsin taxes under ss 49.857 and 73.0301, Wis. Stats. (reference s. NR 114.195, Wis. Adm. Code).

6.5 Application Fees

The applicant must pay the appropriate application fees based on Wisconsin residency and number of intended septage servicing vehicles. Current fees are:

- $50 per Wisconsin vehicle,
- $100 per out-of-Wisconsin (non-resident) vehicle, and

- $100 groundwater fee for both Wisconsin resident and non-resident businesses.

6.6 Complete Vehicle Inspection Report(s)

A vehicle inspection must be completed for each vehicle the owner or operator intends to utilize under the proposed septage business license. This inspection demonstrates that the vehicle complies with s. NR 113.06, Wis. Adm. Code.

The applicant must complete the *"Wisconsin Septage Servicing Licensee Vehicle Inspection Report"* (form 3400-019) and include photographs of the vehicle as specified on the form 3400-019. To efficiently process the vehicle inspection report, the department recommends that a certified master operator complete the vehicle inspection report to ensure the application is complete.

After receipt of the above information, the department will email the septage business applicant the business license number. This number must be displayed on at least one side of the vehicle per s. NR 113.06(2)(m)2., Wis. Adm. Code. Once the vehicle lettering has been updated, the applicant must email photographs to the DNR Septage Certification Coordinator. This step is necessary to complete business registration.

IMPORTANT: If the vehicle meets ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code requirements, the vehicle will be issued a business license sticker (usually at time of license issuance). This sticker must be properly displayed on the vehicle per s. NR 113.06(2)(m)1., Wis. Adm. Code.

6.7 Submittal of New Business Application Materials

The applicant must submit paper copies of the above documents to the department. The completion and submission of the septage business application and appropriate fees are mandatory under s. 281.48, Wis. Stats., and ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code. Incomplete applications will be denied in writing by the department. Failure to complete an application and receive a septage business license prior to septage servicing may result in stepped enforcement (example: issuance of citations) pursuant to ss. NR 113.14 and NR 114.245, Wis. Adm. Code.

6.8 License Renewal

Septage business licenses and vehicle stickers are valid for two years and expire on June 30 in every odd-numbered year.

6.8 Business Notification Requirements (Post-License Issuance)

Every septage business must notify the department (in writing) within 15 days of any change to:

- Business address,

- Change to any service vehicle,
- Change of owner, or
- Change of OIC (reference: s. NR 113.04(2), Wis. Adm. Code).

This notification should be directed (in writing) to the DNR Septage Operator Certification Coordinator and Regional Septage Coordinator.

7.0 Types of Septage Operators

7.1 Overview

All individuals servicing septage shall be properly certified under the following designations: operator-in-training (OIT), certified septage operator, and/or master operator pursuant to ch. NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code. Certified individuals have completed the requirements established in chs. NR 113 and NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code. Certification requirements depend on the type of septage operator as detailed below.

Note: A certification exemption is allowed for portable restroom servicing assistants (PRSAs). PRSAs must work under the direction of the OIC and are limited to only servicing portable restrooms and cannot landspread septage. See Section 15 ("Portable Restroom Businesses") for more details.

7.2 Operators-in-Training (OITs)

An operator-in-training or "OIT" is an individual considered to be doing septage servicing under the certification of the designated operator–in–charge (or "OIC"). **IMPORTANT:** The OIC is responsible for the actions of the OIT (reference: s. NR 114.16(2)(b), Wis. Adm. Code).

The OIC shall register the OIT by submitting the "Septage: Operator-in-Training (OIT) Registration Application" (form 3400-174 AKA "174 Form"). As part of this application, the OIC must identify if the applicant has been previously registered as an OIT pursuant to s. NR 114.16(2), Wis. Adm. Code.

An OIT may engage in septage servicing for up to 12 months without being certified as a septage operator. For example, if an OIT registered March 1, 2023, the OIT registration would end March 1, 2024. This time period offers the OIT an opportunity to learn the septage servicing trade and prepare for the septage operator certification exam to become a licensed septage operator.

If the 12-month OIT period ends without a passed certified operator exam, the individual cannot re-register immediately to extend the OIT period. The department cannot extend the expiration date for the OIT. However, individuals may take the certified operator exam at any time and as many times as is needed to pass and become a certified septage operator. The OIT status is not required to take the exam.

Five years after the end of the last OIT term (12-month term), a person that was registered with the department as an OIT may be re-registered with the department as an OIT and engage in septage servicing for up to 12 months without being certified (reference: ps. NR 114.16(2)(a), Wis. Adm. Code).

7.3 Septage Operators

A certified septage operator is a person who has been issued a certificate by the department to do septage servicing (reference s. NR 114.153(3), Wis. Adm. Code).

There are two categories of certification "grades" for septage servicing operators, referred to as "grades":

- **Grade T Certified Operator**. A "Grade T" operator is certified to conduct all aspects of septage servicing except the land application of septage. To qualify for certification as a grade T operator, a person shall pass the "Grade T" examination (reference s. NR 114.17(1)(a), Wis. Adm. Code).
- **Grade L Certified Operator**. A "Grade L" operator is certified to conduct all aspects of septage servicing including the land application of septage. To qualify for certification as a grade L operator, a person shall pass the "Grade L" examination (reference s. NR 114.17(1)(b), Wis. Adm. Code).

Conversion of Operator Grade L certification to Grade T certification. The department may convert a grade L certification to a grade T certification in any of the following circumstances:

- A grade L certified operator requests the department in writing to convert the certification to a grade T certified operator; or
- The department converts the certification as specified as part of enforcement under s. NR 114.24 (2), Wis. Adm. Code.

Change from Operator Grade T certification to Grade L certification. Operators may change their certification from a grade T to a grade L at any time by passing the Grade L examination as described above.

7.4 Master Operators

A master operator is a certified operator who has been issued a master operator certificate by the department (reference ss. NR 114.153(4m), and NR 114.18, Wis. Adm. Code). Only individuals with a master operator certification are qualified to be operators–in–charge (OIC). Generally, it takes a septage operator approximately 1-2 years to meet the minimum master operator requirement; operators should plan accordingly.

"Grade T" Master Operator. In order for a septage "Grade T" certified operator to become a septage "Grade T" master operator, the individual must complete the following tasks:

- Submit a notarized 1600-hour work experience statement to the department for review and approval;
- Participate in a mandatory master operator training class;
- Pass the master operator "Grade T" exam; and
- Pay applicable fees.
- *Note: The class and examinations may be taken prior to obtaining the required experience.*

"Grade L" Master Operator. In order for a septage "Grade L" certified operator to become a septage "Grade L" master operator, the individual must complete the following tasks:

- Submit a notarized 1600-hour work experience statement to the department for review and approval;
- Participate in a mandatory master operator training class;
- Pass the master operator "Grade T" and "Grade L" exams; and
- Pay applicable fees.
- *Note: The class and examinations may be taken prior to obtaining the required experience.*

The department recommends that septage operators review the *"Applicant Work Experience Requirements for Septage Master Operator Applicants"* guidance document for more details on how to develop a complete work experience statement.

Master Operator Class. The Master Operator Class is open to certified operators and master operators for a minimum of three compliance credits. It is recommended that operators attend the Master Operator Class prior to sitting for the Master Operator Exam. This class must be offered at least twice/year, and covers all topics relevant to septage servicing, land application, and disposal (reference: s. NR 114.18(3), Wis. Adm. Code).

Master Operator Compliance Credit Hours. All "Grade T" and "Grade L" master operators shall obtain 18 hours of department approved continuing education, including not less than 3 hours of certified compliance continuing education, within the 3-year term of the certification (reference: s. NR 114.23(2), Wis. Adm. Code).

Note: Upgrading to the master operator level does not change an operator's certification expiration date. Depending on when the operator upgrades, the number of credits they must earn prior to renewal may be reduced on a case-by-case basis. The number of required credits ranges from 3 to 18 credits, 3 of which must be compliance credits. The number of required credits for renewal is printed on the certificate issued when the certification is upgraded.

Conversion of Master Operator Grade L certification to Grade T certification. The department may convert a grade L master operator certification to a grade T master operator certification in any of the following circumstances:

- A grade L master operator requests the department in writing to convert the certification to a grade T master operator; or
- The department converts the certification as specified as part of enforcement under s. NR 114.24(2), Wis. Adm. Code.

7.5 Operator-in-Charge (OIC)

An operator–in–charge is an individual who has been designated by the owner to be in direct, responsible charge of the septage business. Only operators with the master operator certification may be designated as the OIC of a septage business. See Section 8 ("Septage Operator-in-Charge (OIC)") for more details.

7.6 Change in Contact Information

Operators should notify the Septage Operator Certification Program of any change in contact information (phone number, email address, and mailing address). Operators may either include updated contact information with their renewal materials or email DNROpCertSeptage@Wisconsin.gov. It is recommended that the operator provide their full name and operator certification number to ensure timely updates to the department's database.

7.7 Compliance Training Requirements

The department requires that septage operators obtain certified operator continuing education hours that focus on:

- Wisconsin Administrative Code compliance (chs. NR 113 and NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code),
- Other relevant provisions in Wisconsin Administrative Code,
- New technological innovations in the septage industry, and/or
- Additional general septage-related knowledge and skills (examples: CPR, first aid, and confined space entry training).

Note: Certified operator continuing education is commonly known as "compliance" training.

The department shall develop or approve training relevant to the septage servicing profession sufficient to fulfill the continuing education requirements. Trainings shall be offered at frequencies and at diverse enough locations around the state to facilitate fulfillment of these requirements (reference s. NR 114.23(3), Wis. Adm. Code).

Certified Operator ("Grade T" and "Grade L"). All "Grade T" and "Grade L" septage operators shall obtain 3 hours of certified compliance continuing education within the 3-year term of the certification (reference: s. NR 114.23(1), Wis. Adm. Code).

Master Operator ("Grade T" and "Grade L"). All "Grade T" and "Grade L" master operators shall obtain 18 hours of department approved continuing education, including not less than 3 hours of certified compliance continuing education, within the 3-year term of the certification (reference: s. NR 114.23(2), Wis. Adm. Code). *Note: The additional 15 hours may*

be in the form of compliance credits, general septage credits, or a combination of compliance and general credits.

IMPORTANT: An operator's credits must be earned in the three-year period prior to operator certification renewal. For example, if a master operator was certified March 1, 2023, the operator must earn 3 compliance hours and 15 general hours before their certification expires March 1, 2026. Extra credit hours do not carry over and may not be used for a future certification renewal.

See the DNR "*Septage Operator Certification*" webpage for additional information.

7.8 Septage Operator Certification Renewal

All septage operator and master operator certifications expire three years from the date of issuance (reference: s. NR 114.22(1), Wis. Adm. Code). For example, if a septage operator was certified in March 2023, the operator certification would expire March 1, 2026.

IMPORTANT: Operators are responsible for keeping track of their certification expiration date, accumulating the required number of continuing education credits, and ensuring fees are paid.

Operators may not continue to service septage with an expired certification (reference: s. NR 114.22(3)(d), Wis. Adm. Code). Continuing to service septage with an expired certification may result in stepped enforcement from the department.

An individual whose operator or master operator certification has expired may within one year of the expiration date be reinstated by paying the renewal fee, the late penalty fee, and fulfilling the continuing education requirements (reference: s. NR 114.22(3)(a), Wis. Adm. Code).

Operators and master operators may not renew a certification by taking the certification examinations in lieu of obtaining continuing education credits unless the certification has been expired for at least one year (reference s. NR 114.22(3)(c), Wis. Adm. Code).

If an individual's master operator certification is expired less than 5 years but more than 1 year, the person may use previous septage operator work experience from the 2 years prior to the expiration date to fulfill the 1600-hour master operator experience requirement. The department may require the person to participate in the master operator training class and pass the appropriate the master operator examinations to fulfill the master operator requirements (reference s. NR 114.22(3)(b), Wis. Adm. Code).

8.0 Septage Operator-in-Charge (OIC)

8.1 Overview

A septage operator–in–charge or "OIC" is an individual that has been designated by the owner to be in direct, responsible charge of the septage business (reference: s. NR 114.153(5), Wis. Adm. Code). **IMPORTANT:** Only operators with the master operator certification may be designated as the OIC of a septage business.

A septage business owner must designate an OIC of the appropriate grade based upon the type of business and the method(s) of septage disposal. For example, if the owner desired to dispose of septage at both a WWTF and landspreading field, then the owner would need to designate a "Grade L" OIC.

8.2 Designate Operator-in-Charge (OIC)

Each septage business must designate a certified master operator as the operator-in-charge (OIC) for the business per ss. NR 113.05(1)(a) and NR 114.18(1), Wis. Adm. Code. The OIC is the individual designated by the owner to be directly responsible for the operation of the septage business in accordance with the requirements of chs. NR 113 and NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code.

The licensed septage business may only perform aspects of septage servicing that correspond to the OIC "grade" designation.

- A "grade T" master operator may conduct all aspects of septage servicing except land application of septage (reference s. NR 114.17(1)(a), Wis. Adm. Code).
- A "grade L" master operator may conduct all aspects of septage servicing including land application of septage (reference s. NR 114.17(1)(b), Wis. Adm. Code).

IMPORTANT: It is not a requirement that the business owner be a certified septage operator (or certified septage master operator). However, the business owner must designate a properly certified OIC (individual with an active master operator license "grade T" or "grade L") before a septage business license is issued.

8.3 OIC Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the OIC include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Submit and certify annual reports ("52 form" and "55 form" reports);
- Serve as the primary contact for DNR staff;
- Maintain operator records and coordinate operator renewals;
- Perform regular vehicle inspections;
- Perform regular septage storage facility inspections;
- Ensure operators are trained properly in accordance with disposal regulation;
- Draft and regularly update standard operating procedures (SOP);

- Draft and regularly update spill response plans;
- Draft and regularly update management plans;
- Oversee/verify that land application methods comply with ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code;
- Verify operators are trained in performing safe servicing operations, and
- Ensure daily log book and invoice record systems are completed accurately.

8.4 Changes in OIC

The business owner shall notify the department of any change of the designated OIC as soon as possible but no later than 15 days after the change (reference s. NR 113.04(2), Wis. Adm. Code. The department requests providing notification via email (DNROpCertSetpage@Wisconsin.gov) or mail to DNR Madison office listed on the "Septage Business License Requirements" webpage.

As part of this written notification, please indicate the septage business name, septage business license, number, full OIC name, and OIC certification number, and start date of the new OIC.

8.5 Emergency OIC Situation

The department developed guidelines, expectations, and instructions to assist business owners when the only master operator (serving as OIC) exits from a licensed septage business due to an untimely death or temporary or permanent incapacitation. Please reference the *"Streamlined Variance Procedures for Emergency Operator-in-Charge (OIC) Situations"* guidance document for more details.

8.6 Emergency OIC Situation

The department may convert a grade L OIC to a grade T OIC in any of the following circumstances:

- A grade L OIC requests the department in writing to convert the certification to a grade T OIC; or
- The department converts the OIC certification as specified as part of enforcement under s. NR 114.24(2), Wis. Adm. Code.

8.7 OIC Expired Certification

If an operator–in–charge (OIC) lets their master operator certification expire, the business must assign another master operator as OIC. The department recommends that each septage business have at least two master operators on staff:

- One master operator to serve as the OIC, and
- One master operator to serve a "backup" OIC.

IMPORTANT: If the OIC's certification expires and there is no backup master operator, then the business must cease servicing septage (reference s. NR 113.04(1)(b), Wis. Adm. Code). Continuing to service septage without a certified OIC may result in stepped enforcement from the department.

8.8 OIC Designated for Multiple Septage Businesses

A master operator may be designated as the OIC for more than one septage business license. However, that OIC is directly responsible for each business (see Section 8.3 above). It is important that the OIC provide day-to-day oversight for each business. In these situations, the department recommends that this OIC develop SOPs to ensure operators, vehicles, records, disposal activities comply with chs. NR 113 and NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code.

9.0 Septage Servicing Vehicles

9.1 Overview

Every vehicle used for septage servicing and disposal must be registered with the department. Vehicles must be inspected and registered by the business that owns or uses the vehicle. This registration must occur prior to servicing, transporting, or disposal of septage.

Once the vehicle is approved, the department issues a sticker that is valid until business renewal time. The sticker must be prominently displayed on the rear of the vehicle servicing tank per s. NR 113.06(2)(m)1., Wis. Adm. Code.

9.2 Septage Vehicle Requirements

Vehicles used for servicing and transport of septage shall conform with the requirements of ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code. General requirements for septage vehicles are specified under s. NR 113.06, Wis. Adm. Code, and include:

- **License Sticker**. A valid business license sticker must be prominently displayed on the rear of the vehicle servicing tank. Reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(m)1., Wis. Adm. Code.
- **License Number (Side of Vehicle)**. Each licensee shall display on at least one side of the septage vehicle the words *"Wisconsin Sanitary Licensee"* and immediately under those words *"License No. "* with the number of its license. Letters and numbers must be at least 2 inches high, and lettering and numbering must be in distinct color contrast to its background. Reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(m)2., Wis. Adm. Code.
- **Tank Capacity (Lettering on Back of Vehicle).** Each licensee shall display on each vehicle the capacity of the tank in gallons, in lettering and numbers at least 2 inches high in a color distinct from the background. The lettering and numbers must be readily visible on the rear of the vehicle. *Note: If the vehicle carries a tank of clean rinse water,*

only the septage capacity must be listed. Reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(m)3., Wis. Adm. Code.

- **Tank Condition.** Each tank shall be strong enough for all conditions of operation, leakproof, contain inertia baffles, and be designed to be kept tightly closed to prevent spillage or escape of odors while in transport or storage. Reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(g), Wis. Adm. Code.
- **Pumps.** Pumps shall be adequate for the required service. The installation shall be designed to prevent backflow or leakage. Connection shall be provided with caps or seals. Reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(h), Wis. Adm. Code.
- **Discharge Valves.** Discharge valves on tanks shall be watertight and capped when not in use. Reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(i), Wis. Adm. Code.
- **Splash Plate (if Applicable).** All servicing equipment used to surface apply septage shall have a splash plate or some other department approved method/device to facilitate uniform septage application. Reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(j), Wis. Adm. Code. See the *"Septage Operator Certification Study Guide for Grade L Certification"* for more details.
- **Cab-Controlled Discharge Valve (if Applicable).** All servicing equipment used for surface spreading of septage shall have a vehicle cab-controlled discharge value. Reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(n), Wis. Adm. Code. See the *"Septage Operator Certification Study Guide for Grade L Certification"* for more details.
- **Additional In-Cab Requirements.** The vehicle cab shall have copies of the current ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code and spill and accident cleanup procedures (references: ss. NR 113.06(3)(c)1. and 2., Wis. Adm. Code)

9.3 Additional Vehicle Requirements

Ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code requires that every business shall provide or have available facilities for washing vehicles, tanks, implements, and tools. These facilities should be designed to prevent a nuisance to the general public. Clean and well-maintained equipment provides an image of a well-run professional business. Reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(L), Wis. Adm. Code.

IMPORTANT: The wastewater from equipment cleaning must be handled in the same manner as septage. This means it must go to an approved land application site or to a wastewater treatment plant. Discharge to a sanitary sewer is acceptable. Discharges to roadside ditches, storm sewers, or land that is not an approved land application site are not acceptable and are subject to stepped enforcement.

9.4 Recommended Vehicle Inspections and Maintenance

The department recommends that the OIC routinely inspect each servicing vehicle to ensure that it is properly maintained and stocked. Significant issues (example: leaking valve) should be addressed prior to additional septage servicing. The OIC should consider developing a standard operating procedures (SOP) and/or checklist for completing these inspections.

9.5 Portable Restroom Vehicle Exemptions

Chapter NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code (register 2021) includes several exemptions for vehicles that solely service portable restroom waste. These exemptions are further described in Section 15 ("Portable Restroom Businesses").

There are additional daily log book and invoice record system exemptions for vehicles that solely service portable restroom waste. See the "Portable Restroom Businesses" tab for additional details.

9.6 Department Inspection Authority for Septage Vehicles

Any business engaged in servicing shall allow the vehicles and equipment used for septage servicing to be inspected upon department request. This inspection may be scheduled at any reasonable time and place, as designated by the department. Reference: s. NR 113.06(1), Wis. Adm. Code.

9.7 Septage Business Vehicle Inspection (New Vehicle Registration)

Septage businesses must register all vehicles used for septage servicing with the department.

A vehicle inspection report must be completed for each vehicle the owner or operator intends to utilize under the proposed septage business license. This inspection demonstrates that the vehicle complies with s. NR 113.06, Wis. Adm. Code requirements. The applicant must complete the *"Wisconsin Septage Servicing Licensee Vehicle Inspection Report"* (form 3400-019 AKA "019 form") and include photographs of the vehicle. To efficiently process the vehicle inspection report, the department recommends that a certified master operator complete the vehicle inspection report to ensure the application is complete.

IMPORTANT: If the vehicle meets ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code requirements, the vehicle will be issued a business license sticker. This sticker must be properly displayed on the vehicle per s. NR 113.06(2)(m)1., Wis. Adm. Code.

9.8 Septage Vehicle Utilized by Multiple Septage Businesses

It is common for septage businesses to share one or more septage vehicles. Each business that uses a vehicle that is used by more than one septage business, whether under a single owner or separate owners, shall register the vehicle under each business's license and each business license number shall be displayed on the vehicle. Reference: s. par. NR 113.06(2)(m)2m. Wis. Adm. Code.

9.9 Previously Owned Septage Vehicles

It is common for a septage business to purchase vehicles from other Wisconsin licensed septage businesses. In these instances, the vehicle must be inspected and registered under the current septage business license.

IMPORTANT: The department recommends that the former septage business remove the business sticker and license number prior to selling the vehicle. A new business sticker will be issued by the department after review of the vehicle inspection report. The original owner should also remove the business license number (number lettered on at least one side of the vehicle).

9.10 Renting a Septage Vehicle

A septage vehicle may be rented out to a septage business as long as it is inspected and registered by the septage business. The registration process is similar to the new vehicle registration ("see Septage Business Vehicle Inspection (New Vehicle Registration)" above). The business license number must be on at least one side of the vehicle.

9.11 Replacement Vehicle Stickers

If by unique circumstances, an approved septage vehicle needs a replacement sticker for the same licensing period (i.e., a sticker of the same color and expiration date), then the business may request a new sticker via email or mail.

The business should provide a written statement (letter or email) to the department detailing what happened to the current sticker and which vehicle (year, model, license plate number) needs a replacement sticker. In addition, this notification must include an updated 3400-019 form (AKA "019 form"). In the comments section of the "019 form" please identify the need for a "replacement" sticker. *Note: The "019 form" requires photographs of the vehicle.*

9.12 Gross and Axle Vehicle Weights

Certain roads and bridges have either permanent or seasonal load limits. These limits may be given as either gross vehicle weights or axle weights. Septage operators should be able to calculate both if the empty weight of a truck, the capacity, and the number of axles on the truck are known.

Example Calculation

Given:

Empty Vehicle Weight = 17,000 pounds
Tank Capacity = 2,100 gallons
Number of Axles = 3 axles
Approximate Weight of One Gallon Septage = 8 pounds

Gross Weight = (Empty Vehicle Weight) + (Tank Capacity x 8)
= (17,000) + (2,100 x 8)
= (17,000) + (16,800)
= 33,800 pounds gross weight

Weight by Axle = (Gross Weight)/(Axles)
= (33,800 pounds)/(3 axles)
=11,267 pounds per axle

10.0 Daily Log Book and Invoice Record Systems

10.1 Overview

Daily log book and invoice records systems "tell the story" of proper septage servicing and disposal. Each business engaging in septage servicing shall maintain daily log book and invoice records systems pursuant to s. NR 113.11(3), Wis. Adm. Code. These records shall be made available to department representatives upon request (per s. NR 113.11(3)(c), Wis. Adm. Code).

Daily Log book and invoice record systems are often used to demonstrate compliance with federal (US EPA) and state requirements.

IMPORTANT: Incomplete (non-compliant) daily log book and invoice records systems are the most common compliance issue identified with septage businesses. Septage businesses are encouraged to work with the DNR Regional Septage Coordinator to ensure these records meet ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm Code Requirements.

10.2 Daily Log Book and Invoice Records Requirements

Daily log book and invoice record systems must comply with the requirements of s. NR 113.11(3)(c), Wis. Adm. Code. At a minimum, daily log book and invoice record systems must contain all of the following information (reference s. NR 113.11(3)(c)3., Wis. Adm Code):

- Name, address, and identifying description of service location. *Note: If an address does not exist, alternative identifying information to record the location shall be provided*;
- Date and time of servicing for each service location (*Notes: Date must include the calendar year. Time must include AM/PM*);
- Type of system and description of all wastes pumped;

- Gallons collected. *Note: The records for vehicles used solely for servicing portable restrooms shall record the total gallons collected at each service location*;
- Disposal location;
- Date and time of disposal (*Notes: Date must include the calendar year. Time must include AM/PM*);
- Written certification by the designated OIC (if applicable);
- A description or SOP of how pathogen reduction requirements are met (if applicable); and
- A description or SOP of how vector attraction reduction requirements are met (if applicable).

Note: For a business that does not land apply, a written pathogen control/vector attraction reduction certification is <u>not required</u> (per s. par. NR 113.11(3)(c)7.b., Wis. Adm. Code).

<u>Vehicle Wash-Out Procedures</u>. The vehicles and implements used in servicing shall routinely be used for no other purpose except the hauling or servicing of septage, sewage sludge, or manure (reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(b)1., Wis. Adm. Code). A vehicle may be used for hauling other wastes (example: industrial wastes not regulated under chs. NR 500-538, 660, and 670) provided the tank is flushed or cleaned as necessary prior to and after use (reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(b)2., Wis. Adm. Code). See definition of "wastewater-non-domestic (Section 2.0 "Definitions") for more details.

The flushing or cleaning activity must be logged in the daily log book and invoice record system and include date, time, and disposal details of the cleaning our flushing water (reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(b)2.b., Wis. Adm. Code).

<u>In Cab Requirements.</u> Daily log book and invoice record systems shall be kept in the vehicle for a minimum of 2 days after servicing a system. Records are not required to be kept in the vehicle cab if the vehicle is used solely to service portable restrooms, the records are available at the business location, and the records are made available to the department upon request (per s. NR 113.11(3)(c)2., Wis. Adm. Code).

<u>Landspreading Record Requirements</u>. A written pathogen control/vector attraction reduction certification of the daily log book or invoice record systems is required for all businesses that <u>land apply</u> septage (per s. NR 113.11(3)(c)7.a., Wis. Adm. Code). When disposing at a land application site, specific site related information shall be kept in the vehicle cab pursuant to s. NR 113.06(3)(g), Wis. Adm. Code. See the *"Septage Operator Certification Study Guide for Grade L Certification"* for more details.

<u>Record Retention</u>. All servicing records shall be kept on file and available for inspection for a period of 5 years per s. NR 113.11(3)(c)6., Wis. Adm. Code. The department recommends that records are kept in a safe, accessible location. The business may consider making "backup copies" as well (example: digital copies of records).

<u>Electronic Format for Daily Log Book and Invoice Record System</u>. Daily log book and invoice record systems may be maintained in electronic format by the business, and shall meet the

requirements of ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code (reference: s. NR 113.11(3)(c)9., Wis. Adm. Code).

10.3 Template Daily Log Book and Invoice Records

The department has created optional template daily log and invoice record systems for:

- Portable restroom servicing (form 3400-226 AKA "226 form"),
- Land application (form 3400-227 AKA "227 form"), and
- WPDES permit disposal such as discharge of septage to wastewater treatment facilities (form 34000-228 AKA "228 form").

Notes: The above forms are available on the DNR "Septage Business License Requirements" webpage under the "Septage Related Forms" tab. Septage businesses are allowed to create and use their own daily log and invoice record system formats provided these records meet ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code requirements.

Septage businesses are encouraged to reach out to their DNR Regional Septage Coordinator to verify that daily log book and invoice records comply with s. NR 113.11, Wis. Adm. Code requirements.

10.3 Portable Restroom Daily Log Book and Invoice Record Systems Exemptions

Chapter NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code (register 2021) includes several exemptions to daily log book and invoice record systems for vehicles that solely service portable restroom waste. These exemptions are further described in Section 15 ("Portable Restroom Businesses").

11.0 Septage Storage

11.1 Overview

Chapter NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code was revised and finalized in September 2021. Significant revisions were made to s. NR 113.12, Wis. Adm. Code ("*Septage Storage Facilities*") at that time. The updated code impacts existing septage storage facilities as well as proposed septage storage facilities. The below sections outline the general requirements for various types of septage storage facilities.

IMPORTANT: Approval of new septage storage is a two-part process:

- **Step 1: Plan and Specification Approval.** This approval allows the applicant to build a new septage storage facility or convert an existing storage facility into a septage storage facility.

- **<u>Step 2: Operational Approval</u>.** This approval allows the applicant to store, mix, landspread, and/or dispose of septage from the septage storage facility. *Note: This approval may include the conveyance or issuance of a Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit per s. NR 113.12(1)(d), Wis. Adm. Code.*

11.2 Existing Septage Storage Constructed Prior to October 1, 2021

Businesses with septage storage facilities constructed **<u>before October 1, 2021</u>** are required to provide additional information (identified below) to the department pursuant to s. NR 113.12(3)(a), Wis. Adm. Code. This requirement applies to all septage storage facilities including:

- DNR-approved septage storage using tanks approved under Wisconsin Safety and Professional Services (DSPS) ch. SPS 384, Wis. Adm. Code with total capacity less than 50,000 gallons. These facilities typically don't require a DNR WPDES permit;
- DNR-approved septage storage using tanks approved under ch. NR 110, Wis. Adm. Code (not ch. SPS 384, Wis. Adm. Code), and less than 50,000 gallons total capacity. These facilities may require a WPDES permit on a case-by-case basis;
- DNR-approved septage storage facilities with 50,000 to 550,000 gallons total capacity under ch. NR 110, Wis. Adm. Code. These facilities may require a WPDES permit on a case-by-case basis; AND
- DNR-approved septage storage facilities with greater than 550,000 gallons total capacity under ch. NR 110, Wis. Adm. Code. These facilities are required to have a DNR WPDES permit.

Note: For clarification, this also includes any septage discharges into DNR approved manure storage facilities per s. NR 113.12(3)(g), Wis. Adm. Code.

By **October 1, 2023,** the owner or operator of a septage storage facility shall provide the following information pursuant to s. NR 113.12(3)(a), Wis. Adm. Code:

1. A spill plan in conformance with s. NR 113.12(7)(a)2., Wis. Adm. Code;
2. A management plan in conformance with s. NR 113.12(7)(d), Wis. Adm. Code; AND
3. If available, a copy of the construction inspection report in conformance with s. NR 113.12(6), Wis. Adm. Code. If this construction report is unavailable, the facility owner or operator shall provide an inspection report completed by a qualified inspector for each storage unit completed within the last 2 years.

Please contact your DNR Regional Septage Coordinator if you have any follow-up questions regarding existing septage storage facilities.

11.3 Septage Storage Facilities Constructed After October 1, 2021

Businesses with septage storage facilities constructed **<u>after October 1, 2021</u>**, shall adhere to the following requirements (pursuant to s. NR 113.12(3)(c), Wis. Adm. Code).

- Septage storage shall be designed and constructed to the requirements specified under ch. NR 110, Wis. Adm. Code unless exempted;
- Separation distances shall meet the requirements under s. NR 113.12(4), Wis. Adm. Code;
- Plans and specifications shall be submitted to the department for review and approval; AND
- Within 60 days after construction completion and prior to use, the owner or operator of the septage storage facility shall submit to the department:
    - A spill plan in conformance with s. NR 113.12(7)(a)2., Wis. Adm. Code;
    - A management plan in conformance with s. NR 113.12(7)(d), Wis. Adm. Code; AND
    - If available, a copy of the construction inspection report in conformance with s. NR 113.12(6), Wis. Adm. Code.
- Septage storage facilities greater than 550,000 total gallons must request a WPDES permit. *Note: On a case-by-case-basis the department may require a Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit pursuant to s. NR 113.12(1)(d), Wis. Adm. Code.*

IMPORTANT: For proposed (new) septage storage facilities, businesses must submit the "Septage Storage Facility Application" (form 3400-137 AKA "137 form") including all applicable documents.

11.4 Plan and Specification Submittal Process

In accordance with s. NR 113.12(4), Wis. Adm. Code, septage storage facilities shall meet the applicable requirements of ch. NR 110, Wis. Adm. Code, unless exempted by the department (see *"Exemption from Ch. NR 110 New Septage Storage Facilities"* section below).

11.5 Exemption from Ch. NR 110 New Septage Storage Facilities

The department may issue exemptions from the design and submittal requirements of ch. NR 110, Wis. Adm. Code for a septage storage facility constructed after October 1, 2021 (reference s. NR 113.12(3)(d), Wis. Adm. Code).

An exemption may be granted if all of the following requirements are met:

1. The proposed septage storage facility added together with the existing storage unit(s) located on the same parcel possesses a maximum capacity of 50,000 gallons or less.;
2. The proposed septage storage facility includes only tanks approved under ch. SPS 384, Wis. Adm. Code;
3. All storage tank installations comply with the applicable sections of the DSPS holding tank component manual that is in effect at the time of installation and ch. SPS 384, Wis. Adm. Code.;
4. An exemption application is submitted to the department including:

a. A completed application (*"Septage Storage Facility Application"* form 3400-137 AKA "137 form") providing facts to adequately describe the facility;
b. A septage storage plan index and cover sheet that is properly signed, dated, and labeled with page numbers;
c. A copy of the DSPS tank approval letter;
d. The DSPS approved tank plans and specifications;
e. A set of plans and specifications that provide design and layout and clearly indicate existing and proposed tank locations, building, and building uses, driveways, property boundaries, wells, waterbodies, slopes, driveways, supplementary equipment, land use in the vicinity, and any other relevant information as deemed necessary by the department;
f. A design report that includes plans and specifications for all septage storage facilities; and
g. A statement from the owner that indicates the tank(s) is not a part of a private onsite water treatment system (POWTS) that discharges to the waters of the state.

11.6 WPDES Permit Requirements for Septage Storage Less Than or Equal to 550,000 Gallons

A Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit is typically not required for septage-only storage facilities when all the following occur (reference s. NR 113.12(5)(b), Wis. Adm. Code):

- The storage unit is owned and operated by a licensed septage business;
- When singly or when added together, the septage storage capacity is less than or equal to 550,000 gallons; and
- The storage facility submits plans and specifications to the department in conformance with s. NR 113.12(3), Wis. Adm. Code.

IMPORTANT NOTE*: On a case-by-case-basis the department may require a Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit pursuant to s. NR 113.12(1)(d), Wis. Adm. Code.*

11.7 WPDES Permit Requirements for Septage Storage Greater Than 550,000 Gallons

A WPDES permit is required for all septage storage facilities greater than 550,000 gallons total capacity. In these situations, the applicant must submit an "Notice of Intent" (NOI) for the "Storage of Domestic Septage" WPDES general permit. For more information on the "Storage of Domestic Septage" general permit, review the DNR "General Permits" webpage.

11.8 Proposed Conversion of Existing Storage to Septage Only Storage

When the owner or operator of an existing non-septage storage facility proposes to convert the storage facility to a septage only storage, the storage facility shall follow the requirements specified under s. NR 113.12(3)(f), Wis. Adm Code. The department recommends that the OIC reach out to their DNR Regional Septage Coordinator to discuss these projects further.

11.9 Proposed Conversion of Manure Storage Facility to Storage Facility Mixing Septage with Manure

When the owner or operator of an existing manure storage facility proposes to accept septage into the manure storage facility, the requirements specified under s. NR 113.12(3)(g), Wis. Adm. Code shall apply. The department recommends that the OIC reach out to their DNR Regional Septage Coordinator to discuss these projects further.

11.10 Maintenance Inspections and Reporting

The owner or operator of the septage storage facility, or another person qualified to inspect the septage storage facility (designated by the owner or operator), shall inspect each storage facility as part of ongoing maintenance (reference: s. NR 113.12(6)(c)1., Wis. Adm. Code). Each inspection shall include observations and records for the following:

- Evidence of tank leakage;
- Evidence of pipe or valve leakage;
- Missing equipment (including caps or plugs);
- Evidence of visible cracks or rusting that indicate potential future problems; and
- Disappearance of volumes of septage within the septage storage facility.

IMPORTANT: Maintenance inspections shall be conducted and recorded monthly (reference; s. NR 113.12(6)(c)2., Wis. Adm. Code).

Notification. The owner or operator of the septage storage facility shall notify the department within 30 days of becoming aware of maintenance issues that require the owner/operator to minimize or prevent the likelihood of any adverse impacts to public health, surface water, and/or groundwater (referenced: s. NR 113.12(6)(c)3., Wis Adm. Code). A plan shall be developed, communicated, and implemented to further identify and resolve potential impacts.

11.11 Re-Evaluation Inspection and Report

The owner or operator of the septage storage facility must complete a re-evaluation inspection once every 10 years. This inspection must be conducted by a qualified individual (reference: s. NR 113.12(6)(b), Wis. Adm. Code).

The finding of the re-evaluation inspection shall be compiled into a report and provided to the department. The report must detail the qualifications of the inspector. The inspection report must include an in-depth inspection of the multiple components of the septage storage facility including:

- Piping,
- Valves,
- Tank integrity,
- Foundation,
- Receiving facilities, and
- Mixing facilities.

Note: If the facility is a lagoon, the lagoon must comply with the sealing requirements specified under s. NR 110.24 Wis. Adm. Code.

Notification. The owner or operator of the septage storage facility shall notify in writing to the department of any storage deficiencies, and provide a plan and timeline to correct these deficiencies (reference: s. NR 113.12(6)(b)3., Wis. Adm. Code).

11.12 Transfer Ownership of Previously Approved Septage Storage Facilities

A septage only storage facility for which the department has issued written approval may continue in operation after the transfer of ownership and upon the new owner of the storage facility completing all of the requirements specified under s. NR 113.12(3)(b), Wis. Adm. Code.

11.13 Septage Storage Abandonment

The abandonment of any septage storage facility must comply with s. NR 113.12(7)(g), Wis. Adm. Code. For these situations, please contact the appropriate DNR Regional Septage Coordinator. For a list of regional septage coordinators, please see the "*DNR Septage Contacts*" tab on the department's website.

11.14 Spill Plans

Septage businesses are required to develop a written procedure for spill and accident cleanup per s. NR 113.06(3)(c)2., Wis. Adm. Code. The spill plan must also address spills from septage storage facilities. For more information on spill plans, see Section 12.0 ("Spill Plans and Management Plans").

11.15 Management Plans

Management plans are a collection of detailed procedures relating to storing, mixing, conveying, and land applying septage pursuant to ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code. The management plan typically serves as a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the permittee's or licensee's employees to reference and implement. This document is also utilized by department staff to ensure that the septage storage facility meets WPDES permit and/or ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code requirements. For more information on management plans, see Section 12.0 ("Spill Plans and Management Plans").

12.0 Spill Plans and Management Plans

12.1 Overview

Section NR 113.03(65), Wis. Adm. Code defines a spill as "the uncontrolled discharge, dumping, or leaking of septage or any of its constituents that may be emitted into the air, be discharged into any waters of the state, or otherwise enter the environment."

Any spill shall be cleaned up and the area restored to render it harmless to humans and animals (reference: ss. NR 113.06(3)(b), and s. NR 113.12(7)(a)1., Wis. Adm. Code). A spill plan is a written procedure for spill and accident cleanup to minimize the public health and environmental impacts due to an unintended release of septage. Septage businesses are required to develop a spill plan per s. NR 113.06(3)(c)2., Wis. Adm. Code. In many instances, the spill plan is included in the management plan.

Management plans are a collection of detailed procedures relating to intake and storage, mixing, conveying, land applying, and/or disposal of septage pursuant to ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code. Management plans are required for septage storage facilities. See Section 11.0 ("Septage Storage") for additional details.

12.2 Spill Plans

Septage businesses are required to develop a written procedure for spill and accident cleanup per s. NR 113.06(3)(c)2., Wis. Adm. Code. The spill plan must be kept in the vehicle cab and include all of the following information:

- Department emergency hotline contact information, including the DNR 24-hour spill hotline phone number (1-800-943-0003);
- Mutual aid or equivalent contact information for removing wastes due to an accident;
- Cleanup procedures for spills less than 50 gallons;
- Cleanup procedures for spills greater than 50 gallons; and
- Procedures for rendering spills harmless.

Note: The owner or operator of a septage storage facility is required to develop a spill plan per s. NR 113.12(7), Wis. Adm. Code.

In addition, the department recommends the following also be included in the spill plan:

- Example spill scenarios involving storage, transport, and land application; and
- Contact names and information for individuals that will provide additional servicing vehicles and response services.

The department recommends that all septage vehicles and septage storage facility are supplied with the following spill supplies and clean-up tools: hydrated lime, bleach, disinfectant, water, pointed and flat edged shovels, a wand, a squeegee, a bucket, and other standard supplies. It is recommended that the operator-in-charge (OIC) routinely inspect and restock these items.

IMPORTANT: The written spill plan must be kept in the cab of each vehicle pursuant to s. NR 113.06(3)(c)2., Wis. Adm. Code. The equipment needed to clean up a spill shall be maintained on the vehicle at all times.

Owners or operators of all septage storage facilities are required to develop a spill plan (reference: s. NR 113.12(2)(c), Wis. Adm. Code). The spill plan should include examples of storage-related spill, response and cleanup procedures, etc. *Note: Septage vehicle and storage spill plans often contain similar information. Most septage businesses combine these spill plans together.*

12.3 Management Plans

Management plans are a collection of detailed procedures relating to septage intake and storage, mixing, conveying, and land applying, and/or disposal pursuant to ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code. The management plan typically serves as a standard operating procedure (SOP) for the permittee's or licensee's employees to reference and implement. This document is also utilized by department staff to ensure that the septage storage facility meets WPDES permit and/or ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code requirements.

Owners or operators of all septage storage facilities are required to develop a management plan that is approved by the department (reference: s. NR 113.12(2)(d), Wis. Adm. Code). The management plan includes information for:

- Influent volume tracking,
- Septage storage location(s), inspections, and maintenance,
- Type of septage conveyance (or transportation),
- Land application site identification (DNR approval forms and maps),
- Land application vehicles, equipment, and procedures (pathogen control, vector attraction reduction, odor and nuisance abatement, etc.),
- Alternative hydraulic application rates (pursuant to s. NR 113.09, Wis. Adm. Code),
- Contingency plans for adverse or inclement weather,
- Spill response procedures,
- Daily record keeping,

- Annual reporting requirements, and
- Any other pertinent information relating to the day-to-day operations of the storage facility.

IMPORTANT: Once the management plan is approved by the department, operations must conform with the approved management plan. Should the permittee or licensee wish to operate differently than specified in the approved management plan, the permittee/licensee may submit a modified written plan for department review and approval prior to implementing proposed modifications (reference: s. NR 113.12(7)(d)1., Wis. Adm. Code).

For more details on management plans, please refer to the "Septage Management Plans: How to Review and Approve" guidance document.

13.0 Septage Disposal (WPDES Permitted Facilities)

13.1 Overview

Disposal of septage shall be by discharge into a publicly owned wastewater treatment works (POTW) or other facility for treatment or storage under a WPDES permit (reference: s. NR 113.07(1)(a), Wis. Adm. Code). These locations include:

- POTWs are treatment works owned by a municipality and any sewers that convey wastewater to such a treatment works. This definition includes any devices or systems used by a municipality in the storage, treatment, recycling, and reclamation of municipal sewage or liquid industrial wastes. The term also means the municipality or local unit of government which has jurisdiction over the indirect discharges to, and the discharges from, such a treatment works (references ss. NR 113.03(45) and NR 211.03(11), Wis. Adm. Code.
- An allowable WPDES permitted facility is one that meets the requirements under ch. NR 204, Wis. Adm. Code for septage treatment. This facility may be a WPDES permitted hauler approved to store septage (septic tank, holding tank, sanitary grease interceptor, and/or portable restroom). This facility may be defined as a centralized septage treatment facility (reference: s. NR 113.07(1)(a)1., Wis. Adm. Code).

Septage disposal at WPDES permitted facilities shall comply with the WPDES permit requirements for that facility (reference: s. NR 113.07(1)(a)1., Wis. Adm. Code).

Note: Large domestic holding tanks (for commercial, industrial, recreational, or residential development), which are designed to hold more than 3000 gallons of septage per day (or greater), must have their waste hauled to a wastewater treatment plant (reference: s. NR 113.07(1)(e), Wis. Adm. Code).

13.2 Importance of Publicly Owned Wastewater Treatment Works

In many parts of the state, POTWs offer a practical and economical disposal option for septage businesses. *Note: When landspreading fields are unavailable (examples: growing season and winter), POTWs are a practical disposal option as well.* Larger POTWs may provide 24/7 access to the treatment works for disposal of septage.

POTWs may benefit from increase revenue associated with receiving septage.

POTWs generate sewage sludge following treatment of wastewater. Disposal of sewage sludge is regulated under ch. NR 204 Wis. Adm. Code. Sewage sludge must be tested (sampled) and land applied on department-approved agricultural fields. Specific discharge limitations (sites, metals, pathogens, and vector attraction reduction) apply for land application activities.

Septage Disposal at POTW. Treatment of septage at a wastewater treatment plant allows for beneficial reuse of septage through the generation of sewage sludge (and its recycling to the land). However, there are situations in which septage acceptance may cause issue(s) for a plant:

- Septage is a high strength waste and can overload a treatment plant if too much is discharged in too short a time. This is especially a problem at small treatment plants. To avoid this problem, some plants have holding tanks to allow the septage to be detained and fed into the treatment processes slowly or during periods of low flow. If there is no holding tank, it may be necessary to unload the vehicle very slowly or during off-peak times.
- Septage is usually high in solids and may overload the sludge handling capacity of the plant. Septage may also contain large amounts of grit which will cause excess wear on pumps and other machinery.
- Septage that is high in ammonia may overload the plant and cause a WPDES permit violation.
- If septage contains toxic substances/materials it could kill the microorganisms in the plant and cause a major plant upset. This type of upset can take several days for the plant to recover and get back to normal treatment efficiencies.

Note: POTWs periodically seek facility upgrades (treatment, storage, etc.). The department encourages POTWs to consider expanded septage acceptance whenever these upgrades occur.

For these reasons, most plants have established fees for septage disposal and have strict rules relating to septage disposal. Some plants refuse to accept any septage, especially if they are already at or over their design loading capacity.

13.3 Sampling

Wastewater treatment plants frequently require that samples be taken from the load during discharge, in order to:

- Protect the plant's microorganisms,
- Measure loadings to the plant, and
- Check for toxic or harmful materials if there are problems at the treatment plant.

In order to be useful, the sample should be representative of what the entire load contains. This is not an easy thing to do because septage is high in solids that tend to settle quickly when the truck is stopped.

The best way to get a representative sample from most trucks is to take a sample from the discharge hose as the load is being unloaded. The sample will be most representative if it is taken about midway during the unloading so that it is not influenced by an accumulation of solids on the bottom of the tank or the lower solids portion of the load on the top of the tank. Fill the sample container gradually by taking several small samples as the septage is being discharged.

13.4 Required Disposal to POTW

Disposal of small holding tanks and non-holding tank POWTS (< 3,000 gallons) shall be discharged into a POTW if any of the following conditions apply (reference: s. NR 113.07(1)(f), Wis. Adm. Code):

- Holding tank is located in the POTW's sewer service or holding tank service areas,
- Non-holding tank POWTS is located in the POTW's sewer service area,
- Holding tank is located outside the POTW's sewer service and holding tank services areas if the POTW will accept the wastewater and if the cost to the hauler is less than or equal to "Table 2" under s. NR 113.07(1)(f), Wis. Adm. Code,
- Holding tank or non-holding tank POWTS is located outside Wisconsin, and the point at which the wastewater conveyed into the state is within 20 minutes of a POTW willing to accept wastewater at the cost less than or equal to "Table 2", or
- Holding tank is located within 20 miles of a POTW willing to accept wastewater at a cost less than or equal to "Table 2." This provision only applies to the following counties:
    - Brown,
    - Calumet,
    - Dane,
    - Dodge,
    - Door,
    - Fond du Lac,
    - Jefferson,
    - Kenosha,
    - Kewaunee,
    - Manitowoc,
    - Milwaukee,
    - Outagamie,
    - Ozaukee,
    - Racine,
    - Rock,

- Sheboygan,
- Walworth,
- Washington,
- Waukesha, and
- Winnebago (reference: s. NR 113.07(1)(f), Wis. Adm. Code).

The requirement under s. NR 113.07(1)(f), Wis. Adm. Code does not apply if any of the following conditions are met:

- Storage has been utilized and the septage from holding tank POWTS generating less than 3,000 gallons per day and non-holding tank POWTS will be land applied in accordance with a WPDES permit.
- Septage from holding tank POWTS generating less than 3,000 gallons per day and non-holding tank POWTS is treated and disposed of in accordance with a WPDES permit.
- The owner of the septic tank component of the POWTS is exempt from licensing under s. 281.48, Wis. Stats. (reference: s. NR 113.07(1)(g), Wis. Adm. Code).

Licensed haulers can apply to a POTW for permission to discharge septage. In most cases a POTW can refuse to accept it. However, a POTW must accept the septage if it comes from a septic or holding tank located within the sewer service area or the holding tank service area for that POTW

13.5 Disposal of Septage at POTW (Between April 16 and November 14)

Licensed septage businesses may apply to a POTW for permission to discharge septage. A POTW may deny or approve an application for disposal of septage at that facility. If approved, the POTW may set conditions for disposal (reference: s. NR 113.07(2)(a), Wis. Adm. Code).

Note: The only requirements that licensed disposers discharge to POTWs or that POTWs accept and treat septage during nonwinter months are those in ss. NR 113.07(1)(e) and (f), Wis. Adm. Code.

13.6 Disposal of Septage at POTW (Between November 15 and April 15)

Each year, prior to September 1, licensed disposers may apply to POTWs for permission to dispose of septage during winter.

Applications submitted to POTWs by licensed disposers are subject to review by POTWs pursuant to s. 281.49, Wis. Stats. Note: Section 281.49, Wis. Stats. requires that POTW's shall:

- Review septage applications and provide a written denial or approval to the licensed disposer by October 1 of each year.
- Develop a disposal plan for each licensed disposer approved for septage acceptance (reference s. NR 113.07(2)(b), Wis. Adm. Code).

A disposal plan, at a minimum, shall contain the following terms and conditions:

- Specific quantities, locations, times, and methods for discharge of septage into the sewerage system.
- Requirements to report the source and amount of septage placed in the sewerage system.
- Requirements for the licensed disposer to pay to analyze other than residential septage.
- Actual and equitable disposal fees based on the septage introduced into the sewerage system and calculated at the rate applied to other users of the sewerage system, and including the costs of additional facilities or personnel necessary to accept septage at the point of introduction into the sewerage system.
- All the terms and conditions imposed on the disposer of septage.
- A formal approval that the licensed disposer has permission to discharge septage to a specific POTW under specific conditions.
- Accept and treat septage from licensed disposers unless:
    - Treatment of the septage would cause the POTW to exceed its operating design capacity or to violate any applicable effluent limitations or standards, water quality standards or any other legally applicable requirements, including court orders or state or federal statutes, rules, regulations or orders; or
    - The septage is not compatible with the sewerage system; or
    - The disposer has not applied for and received approval to dispose of septage in the sewerage system or the disposer fails to comply with the disposal plan; or
    - The licensed disposer fails to comply with septage disposal rules promulgated by the POTW or the conditions of the disposal plan.

13.7 POTW Septage Acceptance Priority System

Septage businesses shall cooperate with POTW's in the implementation of a septage acceptance priority system pursuant to s. NR 205.07(2)(e), Wis. Adm. Code.

The priority system for septage acceptance at POTW's in s. NR 205.07(2)(e), Wis. Adm. Code is as follows:

- *"First priority."* Wastes from existing or new holding and septic tanks within the POTW's sewer service area and holding tanks within the POTW's holding tank service area.
- *"Second priority."* Wastes from existing holding tanks for residential or commercial establishments outside the POTW's sewer service area and holding tank service area but inside the POTW's planning area where the holding tank was installed to replace an inadequate private sewerage system.
- *"Third priority."* Wastes from existing septic tanks and holding tanks that were installed not as a replacement to an inadequate sewer system for residential or commercial establishments outside the POTW's sewer service and holding tank service areas but inside the POTW's planning area.
- *"Fourth priority."* Wastes from new or existing septic and holding tanks for residential or commercial establishments outside the POTW's planning area.

14.0 Septage Annual Reports

14.1 Overview

All septage disposal activities (land application and disposal) must be recorded and reported to the department per s. NR 113.11, Wis. Adm. Code. Common methods of disposal include, but are not limited to:

- Land application of septage on department-approved fields, and
- Disposal of septage to WPDES permitted facilities (example: POTW),
- Disposal of septage to Wisconsin licensed businesses that are approved to receive, mix, and/or treat septage,
- Disposal of septage to a manure storage unit (pursuant to s. NR 113.12(3)(g), Wis. Adm. Code), or
- Hauling of septage to out-of-state facilities (examples: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, and Minnesota).

Each business engaging in septage servicing shall submit and certify the following applicable reports when the business land applies septage and/or uses other methods of septage disposal (per s. NR 113.11(3), Wis. Adm. Code):

- Annual Land Application Report (form 3400-055 AKA "55 form"); and
- Other Method of Disposal or Distribution Report (form 3400-052 AKA "52 form").

IMPORTANT: Successful completion of the "55 form" and "52 form" process includes validation, submittal, and certification by no later than January 31, following the year in which landspreading and/or disposal occurs.

14.2 Annual Land Application Report (Form 3400-055)

The Annual Land Application Report ("55 form") shall be submitted to the department electronically (via DNR Switchboard) by January 31, following the calendar year in which land application occurs by those businesses that land apply (per s. NR 113.11(3)(a), Wis. Adm. Code). For example, the 2024 Annual Land Application Report is due by January 31, 2025.

The "55 form" contains the following information:

- DNR number;
- Site/Field name;
- Landowner;
- Acres land applied (number of acres actually landspread, not total approved acres for the field);
- Outfall (septic tank, holding tank, grease interceptor, or portable restroom);
- Amount of waste land applied (in gallons);
- Nitrogen supplied from waste (pounds/acre/crop year);
- Other sources of nitrogen (examples: manure, commercial fertilizer, legume carryover);

- Crop code (reference: University of Wisconsin A2809 "Nutrient Application Guidelines for Field, Vegetable, and Fruit Crops in Wisconsin");
- Nitrogen recommended for intended crop (pounds/acre/crop year); and
- Method of application (surface application, incorporation, or injection).

The following "Outfall" numbers are designated for septage:

- Septic tank waste (Outfall 990),
- Holding tank waste (Outfall 995),
- Grease interceptor waste (Outfall 997), and
- Portable restroom waste (Outfall 998).

If multiple waste types (example: septic and holding tank wastes) were applied on the same field, then the information must be entered on separate lines (use a separate line for each outfall number) of the "55 report."

If there are spring and fall applications to the same field, enter data on two separate lines and distinguish them by the different crop years (ie, spring application for 2023 crop year and fall application for 2024 crop year).

For more information on Annual Land Application Reports and septage land application requirements, refer to the "Septage Operator Study Guide for Operator Grade L Certification" study guide.

14.3 Other Method of Disposal or Distribution Report (Form 3400-052)

The Other Method of Disposal or Distribution Report ("52 form") shall be submitted to the department electronically (via DNR Switchboard) by January 31, following the calendar year in which disposal of septage occurs (per s. NR 113.11(3)(b), Wis. Adm. Code). For example, the 2024 Other Method of Disposal or Distribution Report is due by January 31, 2025.

The "52 form" must detail if any septage was hauled:

- to a WWTF ("end use" code "A"),
- to a facility approved to receive and/or treat septage ("end use" code "A"),
- to an approved manure storage unit under s. NR 113.12(3)(g), Wis. Adm. Code ("end use" code "M"), or
- out of state for further treatment or disposal ("end use" use "H").

The "52 form" contains the following information:

- End use (haul waste to another WPDES permitted or Wisconsin licensed facility that can store or treat septage);
- DNR permit number or license number;
- Name of receiving entity;
- Total amount disposed (gallons); and

- Outfall (septic tank, holding tank, grease interceptor, portable restroom).

The following "Outfall" numbers are designated for septage:

- Septic tank waste (Outfall 990),
- Holding tank waste (Outfall 995),
- Grease interceptor waste (Outfall 997), and
- Portable restroom waste (Outfall 998).

Record the WPDES permit number or Wisconsin septage license number of the receiving entity. If multiple waste types (example: septic and holding tank wastes) were disposed at the same entity, then the information must be entered on separate lines (use a separate line for each outfall number) of the "52 report."

15.0 Portable Restroom Businesses

15.1 Overview

This section covers information specific to businesses that service portable restrooms. Portable restrooms are defined as "fixtures, incorporating holding tank facilities, designed to directly receive human excrement. Portable restrooms are self−contained units, may be designed for one or more person's use at a given time and are readily transportable (reference s. NR 113.03(41), Wis. Adm. Code.

All businesses servicing portable restrooms shall empty the septage from the portable restroom prior to transporting the portable restroom for any purpose. An exception may be granted by the department for portable restrooms that are permanently affixed to a trailer, an integral restroom trailer where the holding tank for the trailer is properly designed to transport wastes and so designated by the manufacturer, or other mobile structure where the design and intent is to transport the restroom with materials contained in the integral holding tank to a POTW (reference s. NR 113.06(3)(e), Wis. Adm. Code).

15.2 Portable Restroom Servicing Assistants (PRSAs)

Portable restroom servicing assistants or "PRSAs" are individuals who service portable restrooms under the supervision of an operator–in–charge (reference s. NR 114.153(8), Wis. Adm. Code).

A PRSA may service portable restrooms, including the maintenance of portable restrooms and the transportation of the restrooms and the septage from them without being a certified operator (reference: s. NR 114.16(3), Wis. Adm. Code). **IMPORTANT:** A PRSA may not service or dispose of septage waste from a septic tank, holding tank, dosing chamber, grease interceptor, seepage bed, seepage pit, seepage trench, distribution cell, or any other component a private onsite wastewater treatment system (or POWTS). A PRSA may not land apply any septage removed from portable restrooms (reference: s. NR 114.16(3), Wis. Adm. Code).

An operator–in–charge (OIC) does not need to register a PRSA with the department. A OIC does not need to notify the department when a PRSA joins or leaves the business.

A PRSA is considered to be working under the certificate of the designated OIC. The OIC is responsible for their actions (examples include, but are not limited to: servicing portable restrooms, recording daily activities, transporting waste, disposal at POTW).

15.3 Portable Restroom Vehicle Exemptions

Chapter NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code was revised and finalized in September 2021. This revised ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code included several exemptions for vehicles that **solely** service portable restroom waste. These exemptions are described below.

- **Shutoff Valves for Suction Hoses**. Suction hoses used for cleaning portable restrooms may alternatively be provided with two shutoff valves with one located at the tank and the other shutoff valve located on the wand end of the suction hose. The applicant must identify an alternative location and request approval by the department for that alternative location. Reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(k), Wis. Adm. Code.
- **Alternative Sticker Location.** If the placement of the sticker on the rear of the vehicle servicing tank prevents the sticker from being visible when transporting portable restrooms, then the business sticker may be applied to an alternative location on the vehicle approved by the department. Reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(m)1., Wis. Adm. Code.
- **Capacity (Gallon) Lettering.** The capacity lettering requirement does not apply if the capacity of the vehicle tank is 1,000 gallons or less. Reference: s. NR 113.06(2)(m)3., Wis. Adm. Code.

15.4 Portable Restroom Daily Log Book and Invoice Record Systems Exemptions

Chapter NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code (register 2021) includes several exemptions to daily log book and invoice record systems for vehicles that solely service portable restroom waste. These exemptions are described below.

- **Daily Log Book and Invoice Record Systems Location**. Daily log book and invoice records are not required to be kept inside the vehicle if the records are available at the business location and the records are made available to the department upon request. Reference: s. NR 113.11(3)(c)2.b., Wis. Adm. Code.
- **Gallons Reported on Daily Log Book and Invoice Record Systems**. Record the total gallons collected at each service location. Reference: s. NR 113.11(3)(c)3.d., Wis. Adm. Code.

16.0 Septage Inspections

16.1 Overview

The DNR inspects septage businesses to determine compliance with chs. NR 113 and NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code. The DNR may inspect a single business or conduct an "audit" based on geographic area (county) or business license type (Grade T, Grade L). Inspections may be regularly scheduled or triggered by complaints or observed violations.

Inspections provide opportunities for DNR staff to:

- Meet face-to-face with the OIC and other certified operators,
- Identify and correct non-compliant businesses to "level the playing field,"
- Identify training needs (continuing education topics, DNR website updates, development of information documents, SOPs, etc.).

Septage inspections are a comprehensive review of the septage business, and include the following items:

- Verification of proper septage operator certification,
- Inspection of septage servicing vehicle(s) and equipment,
- Inspection of septage storage units (if applicable),
- Review of landspreading practices and SOPs (if applicable), and
- Review of daily log books and invoice records and annual reports.

Identified compliance issues are discussed onsite with the OIC and/or owner of the septage business. An inspection summary letter is provided to the OIC that outlines all potential compliance issues encountered during an inspection as well as responses required to correct identified issues.

16.2 Department Inspection Authority

Any business engaged in servicing shall allow the vehicles and equipment used for septage servicing to be inspected upon department request. This inspection may be scheduled at any reasonable time and place, as designated by the department. Reference: s. NR 113.06(1), Wis. Adm. Code.

Each licensed business and any person who services a septage system shall keep a daily log book or invoice records systems, and make these records available to department representatives upon request. Reference: s. NR 113.11(3)(c), Wis. Adm. Code.

16.3 Consistent Inspection Procedures

The DNR created standard operating procedures (or SOPs) for inspecting septage businesses statewide. These SOPs include standardized checklists for preparing and inspecting septage businesses (office paperwork, vehicles, and septage storage).

17.0 Septage Enforcement

17.1 Overview

Enforcement actions follow the DNR stepped enforcement process. This process begins with the lowest form of enforcement appropriate for the circumstances and may be incrementally elevated to the highest level of enforcement, resulting in potential litigation in the courts.

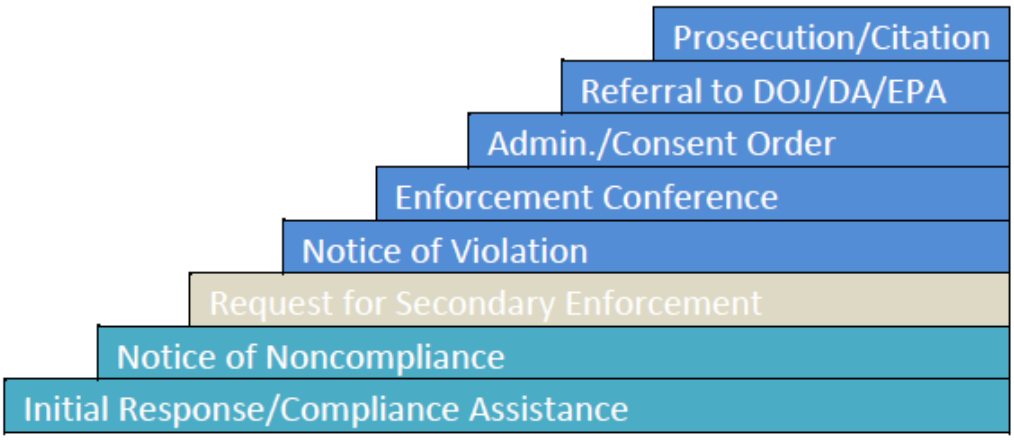


Figure 1. Stepped Enforcement Approach - Levels of Enforcement Action

Figure 1 shows the "steps" of enforcement action that may be taken by the department. The level at which an enforcement action begins is case-specific and based on the severity of the noncompliant event. The stepped enforcement approach is a fluid process, and it is not legally required that all enforcement actions follow these steps in sequential order.

The DNR has the option of referring a case to the Wisconsin Department of Justice (DOJ) or issuing a citation under ss. 281.48(5s) and 281.98, Wis. Stats., and ss. NR 113.14 and NR 114.245, Wis. Adm. Code. A citation may be issued at any point within the stepped enforcement process. Environmental citations are essentially "tickets" for specific violation(s) to an individual or business. A conservation warden issues citations to the individual and/or business.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) Enforcement. The US EPA also regulates the land application of domestic septage through 40 CFR 503. Nearly all 40 CFR 503 federal requirements are included in ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code. US EPA operates independently of Wisconsin DNR, and may investigate complaints and prosecute cases

independently of Wisconsin DNR. Violations pursued by US EPA are generally subject to larger monetary penalties and may also include penalties such as imprisonment.

17.2 Operator Suspension

An automatic suspension of an operator certification results when individuals fail to obtain the required continuing education credits to maintain an active certification. Septage operators are required to obtain three septage compliance credits during the three-year certification period. Master septage operators are required to obtain three septage compliance credits and 15 general septage credits during the three-year certification period. Without the proper continuation hours, the department is unable to renew a certification for an individual and the certification lapses.

17.3 Operator Revocation

The department shall revoke an operator's certification and may not issue or renew a certificate for septage servicing for a period of 2 years if an operator has accumulated 6 or more violations of chs. NR 113 or NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code, or s. 29.601, Wis. Stats., in any 3-year certification period (reference s. NR 114.24(1), Wis. Adm. Code). Enforcement may be taken against the operator, the OIC responsible for the operator, or both.

The department may follow the procedures for issuance of citations under ss. 23.50 to 23.99, Wis. Stats. to collect a forfeiture for violations of ss. NR 114.16 to NR 114.23, Wis. Adm. Code (reference s. NR 114.245, Wis. Adm. Code).

The department investigates and conducts hearings and may, on its own motion or on a signed and verified written complaint, revoke, suspend, refuse to issue, convert certification grade, or refuse to renew any operator's certification if the department finds that the holder of or applicant for a certification does any of the following:

- Uses deception or any form of dishonesty when taking an examination, or removes examination material from an examination site.
- Demonstrates incompetence to perform septage servicing as required by this chapter.
- Falsifies any required applications, operating records, or any other records submitted to the department (reference: s. NR 114.24(2), Wis. Adm. Code).

17.4 Business License Revocation and Non-Renewal

Business licenses can also be revoked or non-renewed pursuant to ss. NR 113.05 and NR 113.14, Wis. Adm. Code.

The department may issue citations to the business and/or responsible individual pursuant to ss. 23.50 to 23.00, Wis. Stats, and collect a forfeiture for a violation of ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code (reference s. NR 113.14(1), Wis. Adm. Code).

The department may not renew a license for a business that has accumulated violations, for the following: ss. NR 113.04, NR 113.05, NR 113.06, NR 113.07, NR 113.09, NR 113.11, and NR 113.12, and s. 29.601, Wis. Stats., during the last license period (reference s. NR 113.05(3)(d), Wis. Adm. Code).

Number of vehicle stickers issued to the business	Number of violations that result in the nonrenewal of the business license
1 to 3	6
4 to 9	12
Greater than 9	18

Prior to renewal, servicing equipment shall be made available at least once every 2 years for an inspection by the department or by a department approved inspector. A vehicle sticker may not be issued if the equipment is found to be unsatisfactory or is not in compliance with ch. NR 113, Wis. Adm. Code. The department may not renew a business license for a business that does not have at least one vehicle meeting these requirements (reference s. NR 113.05(3)(c), Wis. Adm. Code).

18.0 Septage Business License Renewal

18.1 Overview

Septage business licenses and vehicle stickers are valid for two years and expire on June 30 in every odd-numbered year. During odd-numbered years, all licensed septage businesses must renew their license. **A complete renewal package shall be postmarked on or before June 1 or late fees will apply. Business licenses not renewed by June 30 will expire.**

IMPORTANT: The septage business license and vehicle stickers issued to all registered businesses reflect the date businesses and vehicles expire.

18.2 Septage Business Renewal Requirements

In the spring (typically April) of every odd-numbered year, the department mails a business license renewal application to each septage business owner. The renewal application contains the following information:

- Business license renewal application instruction letter, and
- *"Septage Business License Renewal Application"* (form 3400-126 AKA "126 form").

The "126 form" requires the business owner to:

- Verify business contact information (phone number, email address, and/or mailing address);
- Verify vehicle information (license plate number, year/make/description, and tank capacity); *Notes: This list must include all owned, leased, and/or shared vehicles operating under the septage business license. Any new vehicles must be properly registered; see "Septage Servicing Vehicles" tab for more information.*
- Verify that all annual reports have been submitted and certified to the department within the two previous calendar years; and
- Provide a list of all operators (including operators-in-training). *Note: It is helpful if this list contains each individual's full name, operator certification number, and start date.*
- Provide a signature and date from business owner and OIC (even if they are the same person).

Septage business renewal applications (including applicable fees) should be mailed to DNR Septage Operator Certification. **IMPORTANT NOTES:** Check or money orders must be made payable to the "Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources." An incomplete renewal application will delay processing and renewal of a business's license.

18.3 Department Review

In order to renew a septage business license, a business must meet the following requirements:

- **Pass a business Federal Employment Identification Number (FEIN) or Social Security Number (SSN) check**. The DNR shall request a non-delinquency certification from the Department of Children and Families, Department of Revenue, and Department of Work Force Development under ss. 49.857, 73.0301, and 108.227, Wis. Stats, prior to issuing a license, renewing a license, or allowing a business to designate a master operator as operator-in-charge (OIC). DNR submits a FEIN/SSN check for all septage businesses shortly before license renewal. DNR will coordinate with the appropriate agency if it is identified that a business owner is delinquent on Wisconsin taxes or court-ordered child or family support payments.
- **Submit and certify all required annual reports (Annual Land Application and Other Method of Disposal Reports) over the past two calendar years**. The deadline to submit and certify all annual reports is January 31 of each year (reference: s. NR 113.11(3), Wis. Adm. Code). For more information, refer to the "Annual Reporting" tab.
- **Pay all renewal fees**. Renewal fees include a groundwater fee ($100/business) and vehicle fees ($50/truck for Wisconsin residents and $100/truck for non-residents). In addition, renewal fees include a $25 late fee if the renewal materials were submitted after June 1.
- **Verify Operator-in-Charge ("OIC").** The business must have a certified master operator to serve as OIC. For more information on septage master operator requirements, please refer to the "Operator-in-Charge (OIC)" tab as well as the DNR *"Septage Operator"* webpage.

Once a renewal application has been processed and approved, the department renews the business license and mails the appropriate number of vehicle stickers to the business. The business now maintains the license until the next renewal date.

19.0 Preparation Outline for Operator Grade T Certification Exam

19.1 Overview

The below outline identifies key knowledge and principles for the Grade T operator certification exam.

19.2 Outline Grade T Operator Exam

1. **Key Definitions**
    a. Business
    b. Certified operator
    c. Disposal
    d. Grade (T and L)
    e. Grease interceptor
    f. Holding tank
    g. Management plan
    h. Master operator
    i. Log book and invoice record systems
    j. Nuisance
    k. Operator-in-charge
    l. Portable restroom
    m. Septage
    n. Septic tank
    o. Service
    p. Spill
    q. Standard operating procedure
    r. Wisconsin sanitary license
2. **Septage Business Overview**
    a. What are the purposes of chs. NR 113 and NR 114, Wis. Adm. Code?
    b. Detail common septage disposal options available to Wisconsin-licensed septage businesses.
3. **Types of Septage Systems**
    a. What types of waste are considered “septage”?
    b. Discuss the following soil absorption systems:
        i. Seepage Trench System
        ii. Seepage Bed System
        iii. Seepage Pit (Drywell) System
        iv. Mound System
    c. What is a key difference between a septic POWTS and holding tank POWTS?
    d. What are the two types of grease interceptor waste?
    e. Define a portable restroom. Define a privy.

f. Discuss the kinds of repairs that may be required for a malfunctioning septic and holding tank system, and state who may perform these tasks.
g. Discuss operator safety
    i. Understand the Confined Space Entry procedures and requirements.
    ii. Safety equipment.
    iii. Describe the recommended immunizations for Septage haulers.

4. Septage Business License Requirements

a. If a business desires to apply for a new Wisconsin septage business license, what information needs to be submitted to the DNR?
b. Can a business operate without a Wisconsin septage business license?
c. What is an operator-in-charge (OIC)? What are their typical responsibilities?
d. What is a vehicle inspection report? What is its importance?
e. Detail the applicable fees (vehicle and groundwater) for a new septage business.
f. Septage business licenses are valid for how many years? When does this license expire?
g. Within how many days should the department be notified of changes to a business address, septage servicing vehicle, owner, or OIC?

5. Types of Septage Operators

a. Compare and contrast portable restroom servicing assistants (PRSAs), operators-in-training (OITs), certified operators, master operators, and OICs.
    i. What are the requirements (continuing education hours, renewal, etc.) for each classification?
    ii. Can a PRSA service septic tanks, holding tanks, or sanitary grease interceptors? Can a PRSA land apply septage?
b. What is the difference between a Grade T and Grade L certification?
c. How does a certified operator become a master operator?
d. All septage operators and master operators expire every how many years?

6. Septage Operator-in-Charge (OIC)

a. What are the responsibilities of the OIC?
b. Detail notification process for change in OIC.
c. What happens if the OIC's certification expires?

7. Septage Servicing Vehicles

a. Does a vehicle used for septage servicing need to be registered with the department?
b. Detail the lettering requirements (side and back) for a septage vehicle servicing septic and holding tanks.
c. Detail in-cab requirements for a septage vehicle servicing septic and holding tanks.
d. What is the department's authority to inspect septage vehicles?
e. What is the "Wisconsin Septage Servicing Licensee Vehicle Inspection Report"?
f. Detail registration process for septage vehicles shared by multiple licensed septage businesses.
g. Detail the process for obtaining a replacement vehicle sticker.
h. Why is it important to routinely wash vehicles, tanks, equipment, and tools?
i. Given a truck with known capacity, estimate the maximum total and axle weights.

8. Daily Log Book and Invoice Record Systems

a. Detail the requirements for a daily log and invoice record system for septage hauled to a POTW.

b. Detail in-cab record requirements for vehicles servicing septic tank and holding tanks?
c. Is a written certification statement required for businesses that haul septage exclusively to POTWs?
d. Detail record retention requirements.

9. Septage Storage

a. What are the requirements for proposed new septage storage facility?
b. When is a WPDES permit required for septage storage?
c. Detail routine maintenance and inspection procedures.
d. Detail septage storage abandonment requirements.

10. Spill Plans and Management Plans

a. Explain the importance of a detailed spill plan.
b. What procedures and tools are necessary for clean-up in the event of a spill? At a minimum what information must be included in a spill plan?
c. Detail the purpose of a management plan.
d. When is a management plan required for businesses that solely dispose of septage at POTWs?
e. Briefly detail the components of the management plan.

11. Septage Disposal (WPDES Permitted Facilities)

a. Define a publicly owned treatment work or POTW.
b. What types of WPDES permitted facilities can receive septage?
c. Detail the benefits for a septage business utilizing a POTW. Detail the benefits for the POTW receiving septage.
d. Explain the general requirements for disposal of septage (septic tank, holding tank, grease interceptor, portable restroom waste) a POTW.
e. Discuss when and how septage is best discharged to a wastewater treatment plant.
f. List some concerns POTWs have with the treatment of septage.
g. Discuss the impact of shock loads and toxic dumps on wastewater treatment plants.
h. State the starting and ending dates for winter Septage disposal to a wastewater treatment plant and know the application deadline for applying to the POTW for permission to dispose of septage during winter.
i. Explain the procedure and exceptions to making application to a wastewater treatment plant for winter Septage disposal.
j. Describe in what situations a wastewater treatment plant is required to accept Septage on a year- round basis.

12. Annual Reports

a. What report is required for a business that disposes of septage at a POTW?
b. What report is required for a business that land applies septage?
c. What is the due date for the above-mentioned reports?
d. What information is typically included in these reports?
e. What are the outfall numbers for septic tank, holding tank, grease interceptor, and portable restroom waste?

13. Portable Restrooms Businesses

a. What is a PRSA? Who is responsible for these individuals?
b. Detail the three exemptions for portable restroom vehicles.

c. What are the lettering requirements for a septage vehicle servicing portable restrooms.
d. Detail the requirements for a daily log and invoice record system for vehicles solely servicing portable restrooms.
e. What are the two exemptions specific to portable restroom daily log book and invoice records systems?
f. Detail in-cab record requirements for vehicles servicing portable restrooms.

14. Septage Inspections

a. What is a septage inspection?
b. What is DNR's inspection authority?
c. What aspects of the septage business does the DNR septage coordinator look at during an inspection?

15. Stepped Enforcement

a. What is the DNR stepped enforcement process?
b. Under what circumstances may a septage operator certification be suspended? Revoked?
c. Under what circumstances may a septage business license be revoked or non-renewed?

16. Septage Business License Renewal

a. Septage business licenses are valid for how many years? When do these licenses expire?
b. What materials must be submitted to the department as part of the license renewal?

20.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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