

# WORCESTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS SOIL EVALUATION GUIDELINES FOR RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL LOTS

## Seasonal Soil Evaluation Information

*Due by December 31<sup>st</sup>*

### Steps to Submit Soil Evaluation



- 1) Obtain soil evaluation application packet.
- 2) Submit application and fee. *By December 31<sup>st</sup>*
- 3) Submit site plan (tax maps, surveys, or aerials are acceptable) *By December 31<sup>st</sup>*
- 4) Layout sewage area(s) on the property. (Flags can be provided by this office.) *By January 15<sup>th</sup>*

**Note:** No work will be performed on your property until the site plan is submitted and the area is marked. All the above must be completed prior to December 31, for your application to be considered complete.

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### How to choose a Sewage Reserve Area (SRA)

- 1) The highest most well drained areas of your property are typically going to have the best chance of meeting all requirements. Avoid any drainage ways or low-lying areas.
- 2) Lay the sewage area out so that it fits the lay of the land. If possible, situate the area so that all of it remains on the ridge, hill, or highest ground.
- 3) Minimum setback distances for the SRA:
  - 25 feet from all ditches
  - 100 feet from creeks, streams and bodies of water. *Note: some ditches may be classified as streams.*
  - 100 feet from any Residential Wells
  - 50 feet from Agricultural Wells
- 4) Keep out of any Right-of-ways (overhead power lines, roads, farm lanes, etc.)
- 5) A minimum of 10,000 square feet of area is required for each SRA.  
Typical sewage areas are rectangular in shape and range from:  
100'X100' to 50'X200'  
or any variation in between.
- 6) Make sure the area you layout is on your property. Tree lines and ditches are not always accurate.
- 7) If property has been cut over or is heavily vegetated paths may need to be cut to and around SRA, so Environmental Programs staff can access the SRA with their equipment.

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### What Happens Next?

Environmental Programs staff will do soil profiles in the area(s) marked. typically, typically 6-10 feet deep and 3 inches wide. Sometimes 2-inch PVC pipes will be placed in one or more holes. Each week during the wet season the water tables will be read on the property. The combination of the soils, water tables, and management area will dictate how your property will be tested (standard perc test, ring test, or hydraulic conductivity test). Most testing is done in April and May. Final letters are typically mailed late May or June after all testing is completed.

# WORCESTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS SOIL EVALUATION GUIDELINES FOR RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL LOTS

I. Determine which category best describes your proposal.

a. New Residential Lot

- i. Proposed lot(s) has/have been previously platted for agricultural purposes only.
- ii. Proposed lot(s) is/are to be subdivided from a larger parcel. Please contact the Subdivision Planner in Development Review & Permitting (DRP) to determine the number of subdivisions permitted (410) 632-1200.
- iii. The proposed dwelling is to be located on a farm, which already has a primary dwelling. Please contact the Zoning Section of DRP at (410) 632-1200 to determine if this is possible under zoning regulations.

State Regulations require all new lots to have a minimum of 10,000 square feet of sewage reserve area (SRA) per single-family unit. This SRA must be exclusive of buildings, easements, rights-of-way, etc.

b. Existing Residential Lot

- i. Any lot existing (as is) prior to 11/17/1985, must have an SRA comprising an initial and replacement sewage system for the proposed dwelling. Normally this would require approximately 6600 square feet.
- ii. Please provide, in your application, additional information such as number of bedrooms, water using appliances, oversized tubs, etc. This will be used for site specific design details.

c. Commercial Lots (Non-Residential)

- i. This evaluation must be based on actual projected daily flows. Please provide detailed water use and size information on the proposed structure. Enough area for an initial and two replacement systems is required for testing/approval, therefore projected flows are necessary.

II. Make application for a site/soil evaluation to determine if your proposal can be approved.

- a. **Choose & mark the proposed SRA.** Normally, the highest most well drained portion of the property stands the best chance for septic approval. Adjust the measurements of the SRA to fit the actual lay of the land.

**Examples:** A new lot with a broad ridge, a 100'x100' SRA may utilize the best area.

A new lot with a narrow ridge, a 50'x200' SRA may be a better fit.

Any combination in between that is 10,000 sq. ft. or greater can be acceptable.

\*This proposed SRA **cannot be disturbed** in any way by farming, tilling, tree removal, etc., until all the field-work has been completed and surveyor located.

- b. **Complete a general site sketch with the application.** Include accurate measurements of the proposed lot lines and relative location of SRA. Include on your site plan the proper amount of SRA as determined by your category selection.

- c. **Complete the enclosed soil evaluation application (page 4).** Return it to our office with the proper **fee and site plan**. **December 31<sup>st</sup>** is the deadline for accepting applications for the following wet season testing. Please keep the rest of this packet for your information.  
If received **after December 31<sup>st</sup>**, evaluation may be held to the following wet season.

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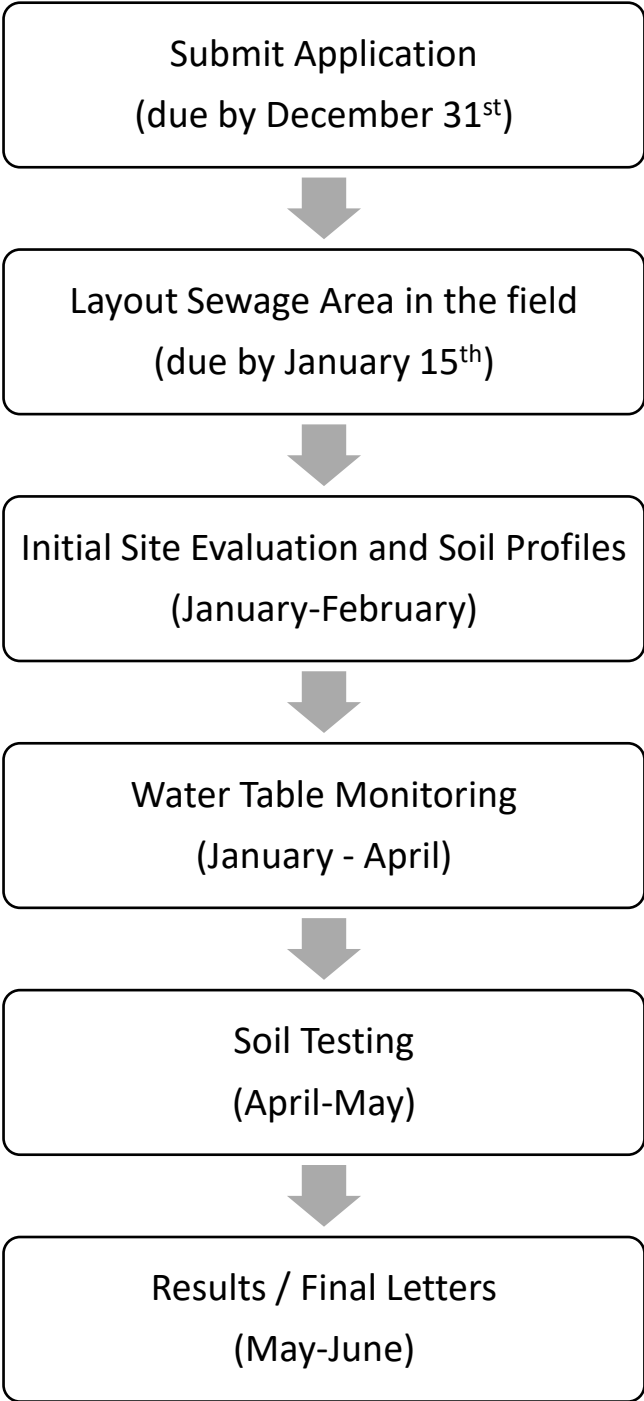
- d. **Please be in contact with the Department of Development, Review, & Permitting (DRP)** to verify that your proposal can be approved under current Zoning and Planning Regulations. Information relating to setbacks, trailers, lot sizes, subdivision, etc. is available through the DRP.

**Any other pertinent regulations that apply to your land (i.e.: Non-tidal Wetlands or Critical Areas should be investigated.)**

III. Once your completed application is received with the proper site plan and fee, a determination will be made as to the need for seasonal testing. Most (approximately 90-95%) of soil in our County requires wet season testing. This type of testing requires water table monitoring generally from January through April, depending on the rainfall.

- a. **After submitting your application, you are required to:**
- i. Stake the proposed SRA(s)
  - ii. Stake the proposed or existing lot(s). (optional)
  - iii. Stake the proposed house(s) or building(s). (optional)
- b. **Observation well/s for ground water monitoring will be installed by Environmental Programs (EP).** The number of monitoring wells depends on the proposed SRA. Water table readings and preliminary soil borings will be obtained on-site. Once the preliminary data has been reviewed, you may be asked to prepare the site for additional review. The applicant does not need to be present for the actual testing, due to time constraints it may be easier for the department to complete testing without an appointment. Should you want to be present for testing, please contact this office so an appointment can be made.
- c. If additional data is needed to complete the evaluation, such as deep soil borings or additional water table monitoring, you will be contacted regarding the installation of additional wells. A backhoe or excavator may be needed when deep testing is the only method available and is permitted in the area.
- d. **Once all the data is accumulated,** you will be notified of the results. **Please Note** the evaluation may take several months to complete **after** obtaining water table data.
- e. **If your proposal is approved,** you will be given further instructions for surveying &/or permits.
- i. **A registered surveyor must be contacted to locate all the fieldwork. DO NOT ALTER OR DESTROY ANY FLAGS OR FIELDWORK.** If the fieldwork is destroyed prior to location by a surveyor, all tentative approval will be null and void. Any further evaluation will require a new application and fee. Testing will not be done until the following testing season.
  - ii. **Please note:** the SRA survey or preliminary plat showing all fieldwork must be submitted within six (6) months. After the preliminary plat is approved, an additional six (6) months will be given for a final plat to be submitted, approved, and recorded. If this procedure is not followed, all tentative approval will become null and void.
- f. **If your proposal is disapproved,** you have a right to appeal the decision, in writing, to the director of EP must be submitted within 30 days of the date on the disapproval letter.

**WORCESTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS**  
**SOIL EVALUATION GUIDELINES FOR RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL LOTS**  
**SOIL EVALUATION TIMELINE**



**WORCESTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS  
SOIL EVALUATION GUIDELINES FOR RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL LOTS**



**APPLICATION FOR RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION/  
SMALL COMMERCIAL SITE/SOIL EVALUATIONS**

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATION TO: WORCESTER COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS  
(FEE & SITE PLAN) ONE WEST MARKET STREET  
MUST BE RECEIVED BY DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup> GOVERNMENT CENTER, ROOM 1306  
SNOW HILL, MD 21863

PROPERTY LOCATION (Road Name, #, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_  
DIRECTIONS TO SITE FROM THE NEAREST ROAD \_\_\_\_\_

TAX MAP: \_\_\_ PARCEL: \_\_\_ LOT \_\_\_ TAX ID # \_\_\_\_\_ PROPERTY SIZE:(currently) \_\_\_\_\_ (AC/SF)  
PROPERTY OWNER: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT PERSON:(If Different) \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ \* TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ \*  
EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ \* EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ \*  
PROPOSED USE (#BEDROOMS, SQ.FT., # PEOPLE, ETC.): \_\_\_\_\_

(\*ALL SHOULD BE BEST # 8:00-4:30 M-F)

Proposed # of lots to be tested: \_\_\_\_\_ Proposed lot size \_\_\_\_\_ Total fee to be paid: \_\_\_\_\_  
Application fee is \$350.00 per SRA to be tested. (Make checks payable to Worcester County Commissioners.)

**HAVE YOU CONTACTED DRP ABOUT THIS? Y or N**  
*Does this site have wetlands? Y or N      Critical Areas? Y or N      Conservation Easements? Y or N*  
(For above questions please circle the applicable answers)

\*MISS UTILITY MUST BE CONTACTED TO MARK ALL UTILITY LINES PRIOR TO EP SITE VISIT.

**OWNER AGREEMENT:**  
As the owner of the above captioned property, I do hereby grant permission to EP to enter upon my property to perform the scope of this evaluation. An original signature or a proxy is required for this application (no faxed or photocopied signatures will be accepted). I further agree the proposed 10,000 square ft (or greater) SRAs will not be disturbed (farming, tilling, grading, etc.) until all fieldwork has been COMPLETED, APPROVED, AND LOCATED BY A SURVEYOR. If the fieldwork is destroyed prior to location by a surveyor, ALL TENTATIVE APPROVAL WILL BE NULL & VOID. Any further evaluation will require a new application and fee and testing will not be done until the FOLLOWING WET SEASON. Please advise the farmer who tills your field of the requirements of this application.

OWNER SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

OFFICE USE ONLY

GPR: \_\_\_\_\_ Mapped Soils: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_  
Site Plan Received:  Fee Paid:  Owner's Signature/Proxy:  SRA Staked:  Wet-Season Testing Required: Y N

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SOIL EVALUATION GUIDELINES FOR RESIDENTIAL/COMMERCIAL LOTS**

*Government Center • Room 1306 • One West Market Street • Snow Hill, MD 21863  
(410) 632-1220 office • (410)632-5693 fax • E-mail [envpro@co.worcester.md.us](mailto:envpro@co.worcester.md.us)*

*Robert J. Mitchell, R.S. Director*



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**AGREEMENT BETWEEN LAND OWNER & FARMER**

I, the owner of property on \_\_\_\_\_ Road, Tax Map \_\_\_ Parcel \_\_\_\_\_, have decided to have a soil evaluation performed on my property to determine if and what type of on-site sewage disposal can be approved there. This evaluation will take at least several months to complete and by which time a surveyor will need to visit the property to locate all the field work and tie its location to known property corners. Because of the nature of this work, I understand that I my farmer will not be able to till, plant, harvest, or treat my land while this process takes place. I also agree to do my best to ensure that the holes, pipes, and flags placed on my property by Environmental Programs remain in place and visible.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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I, the farmer of the above referenced property understand the owner’s wishes and agree to stay out of those fields until such a time as the owner notifies me that this agreement is null and void and all fieldwork has been surveyor located and approved by Environmental Programs.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_