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CLARK COUNTY
WASHINGTON

NEWS RELEASE

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State approves fewer inspections for some septic systems

Vancouver, WA—The Washington State Department of Health has granted Clark County Public Health’s request to extend the inspection interval for pressure distribution septic systems from one year to two years.

“The state’s waiver will improve efficiency, allowing the county to streamline the inspection process while continuing to protect public health, groundwater, and the property owner’s investment,” said Commissioner Tom Mielke.

An operation and maintenance (O&M) inspection is still required within a year of installation for new pressure distribution systems.

The Clark County On-site Sewage System Technical Advisory Committee, comprising certified O&M specialists, pumpers, installers, licensed designers and public health staff, applied for the waiver request after considering the issue last summer. Their application listed factors that mitigated the need for yearly inspections of this system type, such as improved system design, built-in alarms for high-water conditions, improved quality of O&M inspections, and prompt response by public health officials to reports of critical deficiencies.

“When they approved this waiver, the Department of Health cited the thorough performance of the certified O&M Specialists and the success of the O&M program,” said Tom Gonzales, program manager.

Of the 31,000 known septic systems in Clark County, 3,200 are pressure distribution systems, 25,000 are simple gravity systems, and 2,800 are advanced systems for properties with complex drainage issues. Gravity systems are inspected every three years and advanced systems are inspected yearly. All systems must be inspected within one year of the sale of a property.

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More information about septic system types and inspection maintenance schedules is available at <http://www.clark.wa.gov/public-health/septic/index.html>. By linking to MapsOnline, property owners, realtors, and anyone else can view septic system information for specific properties in Clark County.

