



MEMORANDUM

TO: Health District Environmental Health Directors
Health District Environmental Health Supervisors
Health District Environmental Health Program Managers
DEQ Wastewater Program Staff – State Office
DEQ Regional Office Administrators
DEQ Regional Office Engineering Managers

FROM: Peter Adams, DEQ On-Site Wastewater Coordinator

THROUGH: Mary Anne Nelson, DEQ Surface & Wastewater Division Administrator
Troy Smith, DEQ Wastewater Compliance Bureau Chief

DATE: July 13, 1981, revised October 6, 2023

SUBJECT: Use of Wastewater Holding Tanks

This memorandum revises and supersedes previous versions of the Use of Holding Tanks memorandum, and clarifies the use of above-ground and in-ground wastewater holding tanks for onsite wastewater storage and disposal.

The ability of wastewater holding tanks to function properly is limited and short term, often measured in days, and maintenance is dependent upon the initiative of the individual owning the systems. Proper disposal of the accumulated wastewater (a.k.a. “pump and haul”) is dependent upon the availability and use of approved disposal sites and licensed septic tank pumps.

Because of their poor reliability, DEQ will not approve the installation of a wastewater holding tank unless one or more of the following apply:

- The immediate use of a wastewater holding tank is necessary to protect the environment and public health while an approved long-term wastewater disposal solution is pursued.
 - Additional approval conditions for Emergency Holding Tanks are detailed in the Idaho Technical Guidance Manual (TGM) Section 4.14.
 - Delayed construction of an onsite subsurface disposal system is not an acceptable reason to allow a temporary holding tank.
- The local sewer authority provides written confirmation to DEQ that sewer services will be available to the subject property within six months of the date of the wastewater holding tank’s installation, and the applicant demonstrates to DEQ that the use of portable sanitation units during that time would be

impractical or unreasonable.

- The TGM details design and approval conditions for alternative wastewater disposal systems which incorporate a wastewater holding tank, including but not limited to:
 - Floating Vault Toilets and Boat or Vessel Sewage Disposal (TGM Section 4.10)
 - Portable Sanitation Units (TGM Section 4.18)
 - Recreational Vehicle Dump Station (TGM Section 4.20)
 - Vault Privy (TGM Section 4.29)