



Environmental Issues in Real Estate

Septic System Inspection Program by ADEQ

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Beginning July 1, 2006, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) began the Comprehensive Septic Tank Inspection Program. The program requires that all properties served by conventional or alternative septic tank systems have a transfer of ownership inspection performed at the time of the property transfer, regardless of the date of construction. The inspection must: 1) be performed not more than six months before the date of the property transfer, and 2) be conducted by a qualified inspector. The inspector must give the Transferor ADEQ's completed Report of Inspection form, who must give a copy of the form to the transferee. The transferee must submit the Notice of Transfer form to ADEQ within 15 days following the transfer; this can be completed on ADEQ's OWN web-site. In implementing the program, ADEQ hopes to improve their ability to protect human health and improve Arizona's surface and ground water quality.



Separators are a source of contamination of septic systems

Inspection Program Makes Transfers Tougher

ADEQ's Comprehensive Septic Tank Inspection Program adds one more inspection requirement for transfers of properties that have a septic tank system.

Who Can Inspect a Septic System?

Only qualified inspectors can perform the septic system inspection and complete the Report of Inspection form. To be considered "qualified," an inspector must: 1) possess knowledge of the facility type and inspection process, 2) hold a training certificate recognized by ADEQ, and 3) hold a license in one of six categories deemed acceptable by ADEQ (an engineer, a sanitarian, a licensed septage pumper/hauler, a contractor, a wastewater treatment operator, or a person qualifying under a different category designated by ADEQ). ADEQ maintains a list of trained inspectors and a list of approved septic haulers on their web-site.

Aquifer Protection Permits (APPs) and Septic Systems



Many industrial sites with septic tank systems require an APP

ADEQ requires an APP for any "discharging" facility, unless it is deemed exempt or is determined to be designed and constructed in a way that prevents migration of pollutants into the aquifer or vadose zone. Currently, there are 24 types of facility exemptions, four class exemptions, and two activity exemptions. There are two types of permits that are issued under the APP program: General and Individual. ADEQ offers 22 General APPs for on-site wastewater treatment facilities. Septic tank systems (the most common type) require a Type 4.02 General Permit. A Notice of Intent to Discharge (NOI) is required to obtain approval to construct and operate any on-site wastewater treatment facility. Residential-type properties and commercial properties that do not use or store any type of hazardous or regulated materials are typically considered to be exempt from the APP program. However, most industrial facilities would be required to submit an APP Determination of Applicability form to determine program eligibility.

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