

# Monterey County Health Department

## Environmental Health Bureau

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### Soils and Percolation Testing for New Development

A comprehensive site and soil evaluation is an essential piece of information to design an onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS, or septic system) that will function for years to come and ensure that groundwater and nearby surface waterways are protected from potential contamination.

Based on current regulations, the Environmental Health Bureau (EHB) recommends that soil analysis and percolation testing be conducted by qualified professional for all new OWTS. However, OWTS that will serve new commercial operations, employee housing or new subdivisions are required to complete this testing prior to issuance of an OWTS permit. It will be necessary to submit a workplan to EHB prior to commencing a site and soil evaluation for:

- A commercial operation or employee housing facility that will generate more than 1,000 gallons of domestic wastewater each daily; or
- A new or expanded dispersal system for a wastewater treatment facility; or
- A proposed subdivision of land.

The workplan must include:

1. A thorough project description and estimate of wastewater generation based on Monterey County Code, Chapter 15.20.
2. A site plan that delineates property lines, easements, wells (all types), bodies of water, watercourses, drainage ways, existing and proposed structures, trees, downhill embankments and slopes greater than 25%.
3. The location, depth, type of excavation (boring, pit, etc.) and type of testing (groundwater observation hole, percolation test hole, soil profile pit, etc.) proposed throughout the site, that meets requirements on [Monterey County Code, Chapter 15.20](#).

In Instances that EHB is required to witness the soil investigation, it will be necessary to contact the EHB at least 48 hours in advance of moving on site to commence work to coordinate the site evaluation.

### Request for Service

EHB staff are available to discuss your project concept. However, in order to assure that we continue providing high quality service to applicants for ongoing projects, if a development permit application has not yet been filed (planning or construction permit) and you want to meet or discuss a project concept with EHB staff for more than 15-30 minutes, it will be necessary that a Request for Service with paid deposit be submitted first. This request is also necessary for EHB staff to review your soils workplan and/or be onsite during the soil evaluation if a development application has not been submitted.

[The Request for Service form is available on the EHB website](#); to review a project concept or workplan only, we recommend an initial deposit for 2 hours of staff time. When EHB staff is required to be on site to witness the soil investigation, please make a deposit for 6 hours. Any portion of the deposit that is not accounted for will be refunded to you upon request. All requests are processed in the order they are received along with other onsite wastewater, construction and planning permit applications.