

LOUDOUN INSPECTION REQUIREMENTS

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers from SeptiCare

Q: What is the difference between an annual inspection and maintenance?

A: The ordinance requires an annual inspection in which the inspector is required to report the condition of the system at that time and prior to any maintenance or repair being completed. Maintenance is cleaning, adjustment and servicing of mechanical components which ordinarily occurs on a regularly scheduled basis and not in response to an alarm or other unusual event.

Q: Why should I consider a service plan instead of just paying for the annual inspection?

A: The short answer is that all mechanical systems need maintenance and preventive maintenance beats repair in response to a break down every time. Almost all non-conventional septic systems installed in Loudoun County designed were designed to be relatively maintenance free. System manufacturer's have design standards to reduce required maintenance so their systems are competitive with others. Whether you drive a Ford, a Chevy or a Mercedes, the oil still needs to be checked and changed when it's dirty along with the air filter and oil filter. If your tires are worn out, your brakes are bad or your signal lights don't work, you'll have to replace them to pass state vehicle inspection requirements. Your septic system is no different.

Q: I have an existing contract with SeptiCare, how does the new ordinance impact me?

A: If you are an existing SeptiCare customer, we will file an inspection report to satisfy the ordinance requirements at no cost to you prior to the July 1, 2009 due date.

Q: My contract with SeptiCare expired or the previous property owner had a contract with SeptiCare, Onsite Solutions or A-Clean Septic, that has expired how does the new ordinance impact me?

A: If we inspected your system after July 2, 2008, we most likely will be able to file an inspection report at no additional charge, once you renew your contract. If a problem was identified during that inspection that has not been corrected, you may want to correct those deficiencies and perform a new inspection before July 1, 2009.

Q: I have an NSF minimum contract with SeptiCare, is the required annual inspection covered?

A: The short answer is no because NSF minimum contracts cover the treatment unit only. The County ordinance requires that we evaluate all of the system components including the drainfield and other dispersal components. SeptiCare can upgrade your NSF minimum contract to one of our service plans so that you will be covered.

Q: What if SeptiCare finds a problem during the inspection?

A: If you are covered by one of our Service Plans, maintenance and minor repairs can be completed at the time of the inspection visit. SeptiCare's standard operating procedure will be that one inspection report will be filed noting the conditions found during the initial evaluation. If maintenance performed on site that day or within a few days is completed, then a maintenance report and a new inspection report indicating the system is in proper working order will be filed.

Q: What if the inspection identifies a more serious issue?

A: Correction of more serious issues requires a permit from the Health Department to correct. Depending on the issue and work load it can take a week or so to get a permit and another week or so to complete the repair and have the County inspect it. Once the repair is complete, SeptiCare will file a new inspection report indicating the system is in proper working order.

Q: Why do you recommend I have to have semi-annual inspection & maintenance vs. the annual inspection required by the ordinance?

A: Prior to any state or local O&M ordinance, the industry standard was based on the National Sanitation Foundation requirements for secondary treatment units (NSF Standard 40). This standard requires O&M every 6 months and lab sampling of the effluent in accordance with local requirements. SeptiCare has found that 12 months between inspections is a long time even for minor problems and recommends the 6-month maintenance interval as the most appropriate frequency for all non-conventional systems.

Q: Why does my non-conventional septic system in Loudoun County require semi-annual inspections vs. the annual inspection requirements for other non-conventional septic systems if they were both permitted prior to November 3, 2008?

A: If the Loudoun County Health Department indicated that O&M was required on your permit, then it requires semi-annual inspections and may also require annual lab samples. Laboratory analysis is an additional cost and not included in the standard prices given to individuals and groups or HOA's that participate in group discounts.

Q: What are the requirements for non-conventional systems permitted after Nov 3, 2008?

A: Our best information as of May 18, 2009 is that the ordinance gives the health department the authority to require maintenance in addition to annual inspection and their policy will be to require semi-annual maintenance and annual inspection.

Q: How will I know when my tanks need to be pumped out or cleaned?

A: The inspector will make this determination based on the sludge levels in your tanks. We base our service contracts on three year intervals because our 10-years of experience maintaining systems indicates that sludge will have to be removed from one or all of your tanks at least once during a 3 year period. Whether it needs to be done immediately or in three years, you're covered under any of our service plans.

Q: What are my payment options?

A: SeptiCare requires that inspection fee or the first year of the Septi-Safe plan be paid in full prior to or at the time of the inspection. Customers who select the Septi-Sure may pay twice a year concurrent with the semi-annual service. SeptiCare has direct debit plans and accept all major credit cards. If a monthly payment plan suits your budget better, we'll be glad to work that out with you.

If you have any other questions, please feel free to contact us

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