



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Panhandle Health District

Septic Permit Evaluation

Panhandle Health District
Quality Improvement Story Board
December 2015

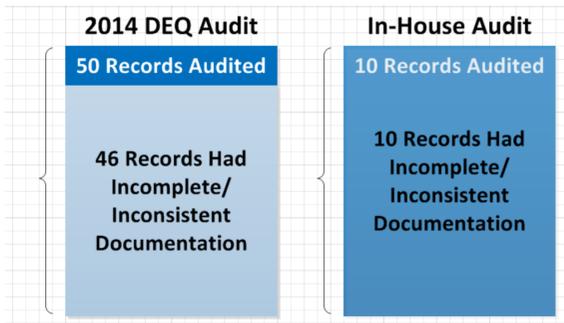


Plan Identify an Opportunity and PLAN for Improvement

1. The Problem

The Onsite Sewage Disposal program documentation was not being fully completed in a uniform manner.

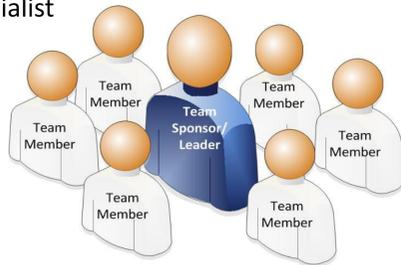
Accuracy of Onsite Sewage Disposal permit documentation is the basis for the program's success. Staff cannot defend enforcement, site approval or disapproval decisions with incomplete documentation. Incomplete documentation could potentially lead to errors in system installation that could negatively impact on the waters of North Idaho.



2. Assemble the Team

The team was assembled in January 2015 to include a Team Sponsor/Leader and key staff:

- Team Sponsor/Team Leader: Dale Peck
- Team Members & Area of Expertise:
Jay Loveland, Sewage Program Coordinator
Erik Ketner, Environmental Health QI Reviewer
Jason Peppin, Senior Environmental Health Specialist
Chris Irvin, Environmental Health Specialist
Tina West, Support Staff



AIM STATEMENT

The Health District's Onsite Sewage Disposal program documentation is not being fully and uniformly completed. The goal is to reduce discrepancies found during regular reviews by 50% for 2015.

Internal Tangible/Intangible Benefits

Routine reviews of the septic permitting documentation process will allow PHD to meet the Rule requirements; enable PHD to defend actions and reduce future efforts; and, have a potential decrease in legal costs.

External Tangible/Intangible Benefits

Increased documentation accuracy would provide a clear direction to septic installers; provide protection to the environment; and, provide a consistent process as well as improved support from the development community.

3. Examine the Current Process

In January 2015, the team examined the current process and found that there were inconsistencies in permit documentation starting with the applicant and continuing through the entire permitting process.

- Staff time during the busy building season did not allow for a thorough review of documentation.
- Applicants were submitting incomplete documentation.
- Site changes were not being recorded.
- Feedback of documentation incompleteness or inconsistencies was not provided to staff.

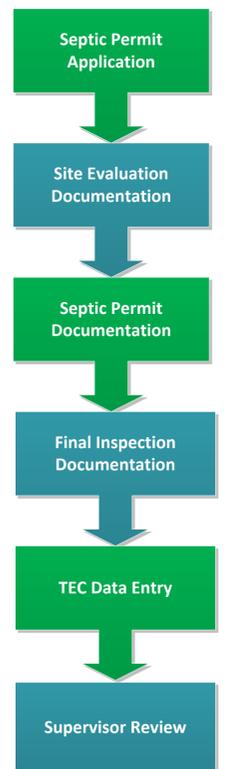
4. Identify Potential Solutions

- Implement solutions to maintain high-quality documentation.
- Incomplete applications will not be accepted.
- Staff will receive feedback of documentation incompleteness or inconsistency.
- The applicant's final plot plan must coincide with the permit requirements.
- Uniform designation of the system replacement area identified on the final inspection form.
- The complete final permit package scanned for the permanent record.

Do Test the Theory for Improvement

5. Develop an Improvement Theory

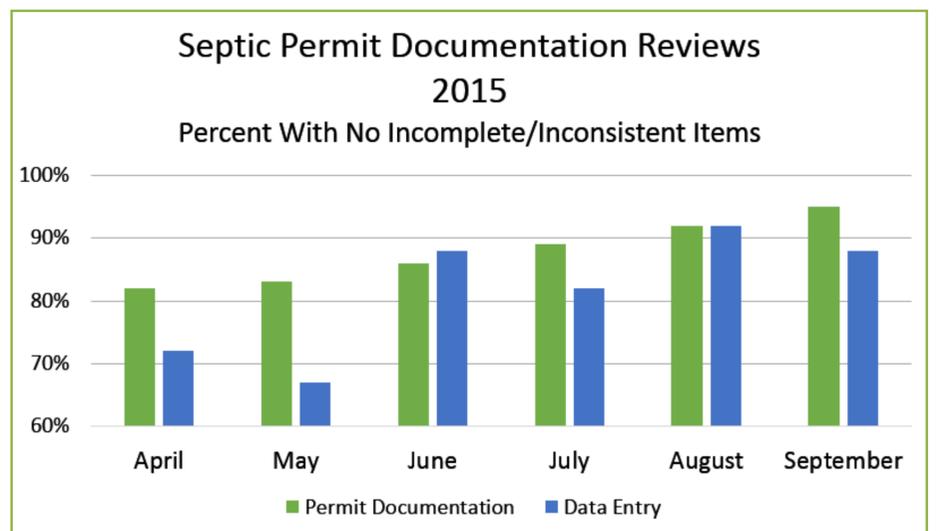
- A team of three EHSs was formed to perform regular assessments on 15 randomly-selected septic permits per month for a period of six months.
- An assessment form was developed to evaluate each septic permit reviewed. The assessment addresses several components throughout the permit process beginning with the initial application and ending with the supervisor's review.
- Two evaluation summaries of monthly assessments are compiled: One for septic permit documentation and one for data entry.
- Staff are notified of the results and made aware of needed improvements.



Check Use Data to Study the Results

6. Check the Results

- Monthly assessment results for April through September 2015 were compiled by month and have revealed a decrease in documentation incompleteness or inconsistency since the beginning of the process.
- Staff are provided with feedback of the results.



Act Standardize the Improvement

7. Standardize the Improvement

- The results of the QI review of septic permit documentation is provided to the staff monthly.
- Incomplete or incorrect applications are not accepted from applicants.
- Applicant plot plans are revised if needed to match the permit. EHSs now carry a blank plot plan form to provide to the applicant to expedite these changes.
- EHSs were trained on uniform documentation of designated replacement areas on the final inspection form.
- CSRs were instructed on scanning the final permit package for the permanent record.

8. Establish Future Plans

- The QI team will continue to perform monthly (April through September) evaluations and inform staff of findings and improvement areas.
- Future Installer's certification training will include a component for documentation.
- EH Workgroup and DEQ are considering using a similar process statewide.
- Changes to the evaluation process will be made as necessary.