

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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## **FLORIDA SEPTIC TANKS, AEROBIC TREATMENT TANKS & FILTER BOXES ABANDONMENT OR CISTERN CONVERSION**

### **Part I: General Septic System Abandonment Information**

#### **Florida Administrative Code 64E-6 Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal**

##### **64E-6.011 Abandonment of Systems.**

(1) Whenever the use of an onsite sewage treatment and disposal system is discontinued following connection to a sanitary sewer or discontinuing the use of a septic tank and replacement with another septic tank, the system shall be abandoned within 90 days and any further use of the system for any purpose shall be prohibited.

However, if the Department of Environmental Protection or its designee approves the use of the retention tank where the tank is to become an integral part of a sanitary sewer system or stormwater management system, the septic tank need not be abandoned.

(2) The following actions shall be taken, in the order listed, to abandon an onsite sewage treatment and disposal system:

(a) Property owner or agent shall apply for a permit from the department to abandon the existing onsite sewage system and submit the required fee. Upon receiving a permit:

(b) The tank shall be pumped out by a permitted septage disposal company who shall provide a receipt or a written certification to the department. Alternatively, if the tank is empty and dry at the commencement of the abandonment, a written statement to that effect by the septage disposal company or the contractor performing the abandonment shall be provided to the department.

(c) The bottom of the tank shall be opened or ruptured, or the entire tank collapsed so as to prevent the tank from retaining water, and

(d) The tank shall be filled with clean sand or other suitable material, and completely covered with soil.

(e) An inspection of the system abandonment shall be conducted by the department or by the local utility or plumbing authority performing the system abandonment.

(3) The permitting provisions of paragraph 64E-6.011(2)(a), F.A.C., are not required if a local utility or local plumbing authority performs a system abandonment program which requires the completion of those steps listed in paragraphs 64E-6.011(2)(b), (c), (d), and (e), F.A.C. If the system abandonment is performed by a local utility or local plumbing authority, the local utility or local plumbing authority performing the abandonment program shall maintain a log of all inspections performed and shall forward the log to the County Health Department on a monthly basis.

(4) A septic tank serving a single family residence may, at the owner's discretion, be converted into a cistern pursuant to the following procedures:

- (a) The applicant shall obtain a system abandonment permit from the county health department.
- (b) The permit application shall specify the intended use of the abandoned septic tank.
- (c) The activities related to abandoning the onsite sewage treatment and disposal system shall not create a sanitary nuisance.
- (d) The septic tank shall be disconnected from the drainfield and from the building sewer pipe.
- (e) All work to disconnect, clean and sanitize the septic tank shall be conducted by a registered septic tank contractor or a state-licensed plumber or by the owner of the owner-occupied single family residence being served by the septic tank.
- (f) All septage, wash water, and other liquids removed from the tank shall be removed and handled as septage (Rule 64E-6.010, F.A.C.) by a DOH-licensed septage disposal service and disposed of at a DEP-regulated wastewater treatment facility.
- (g) The health department shall inspect the tank once it is disconnected, emptied, cleaned, disinfected and filled with water. The inspection shall determine whether all of the following conditions have been met:
  1. The tank has been disconnected from the drainfield and the building sewer.
  2. The tank is full of water within 12 inches of the top of the tank.
  3. The clarity of the water is such that a Secchi disk is visible at the bottom of the tank.
  4. The pH of the water in the tank is between 6.0 and 8.0.
  5. The free chlorine residual of the water in the tank is  $\leq 1.0$  ppm.
  6. The total coliform count is  $\leq 1000$  per 100 ml.
  7. The fecal coliform count is  $\leq 200$  per 100 ml.
  8. No sanitary nuisance condition exists on the property related to the abandonment activities.
- (h) One inspection is included in the abandonment permit fee. The applicant shall pay a reinspection fee for any additional inspection visits necessary until all of the criteria in subparagraphs 64E-6.011(4)(g)1. through 8. F.A.C., are met and final approval of the abandonment is granted by the county health department.
- (i) The applicant shall be responsible for all required laboratory fees. All sampling shall be conducted by county health department staff during the final inspection.
- (j) The septic tank shall be converted and inspected within 90 days after connection of the building plumbing to the sanitary sewer.
- (k) The tank shall not be connected to any irrigation components nor shall the water used for irrigation purposes until final approval of the abandonment has been granted by the county health department.
- (l) Upon final approval of the abandonment, use of the tank or the drainfield for sewage storage, treatment or disposal is prohibited and constitutes a nuisance injurious to health as defined by Section 386.041, F.S.
- (m) Upon final approval of the abandonment, the water collected in the tank shall be utilized for non-potable, irrigation purposes only.

*Rulemaking Authority 381.0065 FS. Law Implemented 381.0065, 381.0066, 386.002, 386.003, 386.041 FS. History—New 12-22-82, Amended 2-5-85, Formerly 10D-6.53, Amended 3-17-92, 1-3-95, Formerly 10D-6.053, Amended 6-18-03, 6-25-09, 7-16-13.*