

Columbiana County Health District

P.O. Box 309 – 7360 State Route 45 – Lisbon, Ohio 44432
Phone: 330-424-0272 – **General Fax:** 330-424-1733 – **Nursing Fax:** 330-424-1843
Email: cchd@columbiana-health.org **Web:** www.columbiana-health.org

Questions and Answers regarding Septic and Well Inspections

How do I schedule a Septic and/or Well Inspection?

- Complete an application form, found on the Columbiana County Health District – Real Estate page, with the appropriate fees paid. Once we have received the application and payment, we will call you to schedule the inspection. Real estate inspections are done only on Mondays, Tuesdays, or Wednesdays. Applications should be submitted as soon as possible, since the process can take as long as three weeks to complete.

Why can the process take three weeks to complete?

- There are many different reasons why there can be hold ups in the inspection process: the well may need to be disinfected and retested, plumbing repairs may be necessary, the septic system may need repaired, replaced, and/or cleaned. If you are getting a well inspection, the water sampled can sometimes take a week to be analyzed and the results submitted to us. If the leach field is excessively covered with high grass, leaves, or snow then the inspection will not be completed. The inspection will be rescheduled once the ground cover is removed.

How do I know if I need to get my septic and/or well inspected?

- Real estate inspections by the Columbiana County Health District are required on all one, two, or three family dwellings using a septic system and/or private water well.

I scheduled my inspection. Now what do I do?

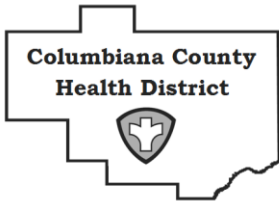
- The biggest thing is to ensure that the lids are off the septic system prior to the arrival of one of the Sanitarians, if you are getting a septic inspection. Make sure that you can see inside the septic tank itself. The Sanitarians cannot remove the lids or find the septic tanks for you due to liability issues. Make sure that the dwelling has running water. Ensure that there is a sink or bathtub without an aerator. If all the plumbing fixtures have aerators, then one will need to be removed for the inspection. The owner, a realtor, or another responsible party will need to be there for the entirety of the inspection, which is usually around an hour.

What can't I do before the inspection day?

- Do not pump your tanks prior to inspection! This will invalidate your test and result in needing to pay another fee to reschedule. Do not chlorinate your well prior to inspection! If there is chlorine in the bacteria sample we take, it will invalidate your test and result in needing to pay another fee to reschedule.

I have an Aeration System. Is there any additional information I need to provide?

- If you have an aerator, then you need to provide the service/maintenance contract for the system. If you do not provide the contract, then the system will not be approved.



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What happens if my property is not properly prepared on the day of the inspection?

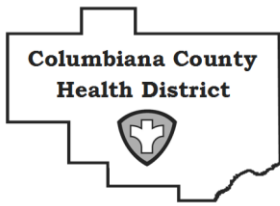
- If your property is not ready on the day of the inspection, then you may be charged a fee to reschedule the test. Some things that may cause a reschedule are that the lids were not removed, running water was not available, the leach field was obstructed, etc. If there are too many solids blocking the view of the liquid, then the septic tank will need to be pumped and returned to the normal operating level. When pumping the tank, you will need to get a pumping report with flow back information noted on it from the pumper. The tank can be returned to the normal operating level by running water from the house or by running water directly into the tank.

My property is vacant. Is there any additional information I need to provide?

- Vacant homes must be inspected prior to transfer. Due to the non-use of the septic system, it may not be possible to evaluate the functionality of the leach device at the time of inspection. A re-evaluation may be required within ninety (90) days of the occupancy of the home. Any deficiencies in either the septic, plumbing, or water systems must be completed in accordance with all applicable regulations. In addition, we will need a signed Hold Harmless Agreement, found on the Columbiana County Health District – Real Estate page. This states that due to the house being vacant, the septic testing is not as accurate as it possibly could be. This is only required for the septic testing, not for the well testing.

What happens on the day of inspection?

- **For the septic inspection:** The sanitarian will arrive at the property at the scheduled time. They will analyze the piping to ensure that all waste pipes flow into the septic system. They will then determine how long to run water to have it completely pass through the tanks and leach device. The water is usually run from a bathtub. After this, they will add the dye to the system. This is usually put into a toilet and flushed. The dye will be seen in the septic system after being flushed. The Sanitarian will walk along the property and check for any dye that might be surfacing or running off the property. There will also be a drawn map of the dwelling and distances to the septic and/or well. After the inspection is complete, a Sanitarian will come back at a later date to follow up and check if any dye surfaced. An owner or representative does not need to be there for the follow-up.
- **For the well inspection:** The Sanitarian will check the condition of the well head to ensure there is no cracking or other damage. Water will be run from a tap without an aerator, disinfected and the sample will then be taken.
- **For the flow test:** An outside spigot will be the preferred method of running this test. We will provide our own hoses to run the water. The water will be turned on and ran for an hour, with checks every 15 minutes to determine flow.



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How long will it take to get the results of the septic/well inspection?

- Water samples can take a week or more to get the results. Septic tanks will usually be followed-up within a week then the report will be sent to you. If you get both a septic and well inspection, then we will send the results once we have everything completed.

My septic has failed. Now what?

- If the Sanitarian determines that the septic system has failed, then there are a few options that you can take. Firstly, this office does not hold up sales due to failed septic systems. When the septic has been determined to be failing and the consequences will need to be worked out between buyer and seller. A failing septic will need to be repaired or replaced if it is determined to be failing at the inspection. A Septic System Repair/Installation Permit will need to be completed prior to making the repairs. A Site Inspection will also need to be scheduled to determine what type of septic system will need to be used given the size of the lot, the slope, etc.

My well has failed. Now what?

- If the Sanitarian determines that the well has failed, then there are a few options that you can take. Firstly, this office does not hold up sales due to a failed well test. When a sample taken from the well fails the consequences will need to be worked out between buyer and seller. If there is obvious damage to the well lid, such as cracks, splits, or holes, then the simplest solution may be to replace the well lid. The contamination may be from outside sources. If you would like to have the sample retested to potentially get a passing result, then the well will need to be chlorinated and flushed. All chlorine must be out of the well for at least forty eight (48) hours prior to having the well resampled. Once the well has been chlorinated, then you can submit a request and payment for a resample.

Who is responsible for the repairs/replacement?

- We will consider the owner to be the financially responsible party for any repairs/replacement of the septic system, plumbing system, and private water system.

How long is an inspection good for?

- Our inspections are good for one year from the time of inspection. If the property sells again within that one year window, then it will not need to be re-inspected. This also means that a system that passed inspection in the previously may fail today.