



# Harford County Health Department

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**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**Harford County Health Department**

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## PERCOLATION TEST APPLICATION PROCEDURE

In the absence of public sewer service, the Harford County Code (Chapter 216) and the Code of Maryland Regulations (26.04.02) require soil percolation testing as part of the site review process for an on-site disposal system (septic system). Any property owner who desires to install a new on-site disposal system (OSDS), or repair or replace an existing OSDS, must first obtain a sanitary construction permit from the Health Department.

The following steps must be taken to initiate the percolation test process:

1. Complete an application for a soil percolation test
2. Submit a site plan.\*
3. Submit the required fee (cash, credit card, money order or check made payable to Harford County Health Department).
4. Provide copies of any previous soil testing results obtained by a consultant, and any environmental assessments that reference environmental or public health concerns.
5. If your system is failing, please see page 2.

### **\*Site Plan:**

1. The basic site plan must be drawn to scale (1" = 30', 1" = 50', or 1" = 100') and contain the following information:
  - a. Location of existing and proposed property lines or easements.
  - b. The footprint of any existing or proposed house or structure (shed, pool, etc.).
  - c. Location of existing or proposed driveway or parking area.
  - d. Location of existing or proposed OSDS or Septic Reserve Area (SRA).
  - e. Location of all wells, OSDS or SRAs located within 200 feet of the property.
  - f. Location of other potential sources of contamination (underground storage tanks, sludge holding facilities, pipelines, etc.) within 200 feet of the property.
  
2. Additional information required on a site plan for the subdivision of land includes:
  - a. Soil types.
  - b. Percolation test pits locations.
  - c. Natural resource districts (NRD).
  - d. Contours in minimum 5 foot intervals.
  - e. Streams, swales, storm water management facilities, etc.
  - f. Forest Retention Areas

(OVER)

*BEL AIR OFFICE*  
1 N. Main Street  
Bel Air, MD 21014  
410-638-3060

*EDGEWOOD OFFICE*  
1321 Woodbridge Station Way  
Edgewood, MD 21040  
410-612-1779

*EDGEWOOD OFFICE*  
2204 Hanson Road  
Edgewood, MD 21040  
443-922-7670

*HAVRE DE GRACE OFFICE*  
2027 Pulaski Highway  
Havre de Grace, MD 21078  
410-939-6680

*HAVRE DE GRACE OFFICE*  
2015 Pulaski Highway  
Havre de Grace, MD 21078  
410-942-7999

# PERCOLATION TEST APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Upon receipt of a percolation test application:

1. The application will be evaluated for completeness of the required data.
2. The application will be reviewed to determine if a percolation test is permissible at this time. Certain soil classifications may only be tested during the wet season (typically February 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup> depending on soil moisture conditions). If the tests cannot be performed at this time, the application and fee will be returned to the applicant.
3. If there is no scheduling restriction, the staff will contact the designated person by phone to arrange the percolation test and, if necessary, acquire additional information.
4. The owner/applicant is solely responsible for contacting **Ms. Utility** prior to digging.
5. Staff will remind the applicant/property owner that he is responsible for providing the following items at the time of the percolation tests:
  - A backhoe and qualified operator to excavate the required percolation tests holes. The backhoe must have the capability of excavating to a depth of 14 feet with a 2-foot bucket.
  - A shovel.
  - Sufficient water for the test(s) (typically 15-20 gallons/lot). Please have the backhoe available at the scheduled time. Holes may be excavated prior to Health Department arrival; however, please verify this with Health Department staff. Experienced consultants and equipment operators generally have good insight as to where to dig. This office does not recommend that holes be left unattended.
6. Staff will notify applicant/property owner of test results via mail upon completion of the percolation test and review of the data. No decision is final until it is received in writing. Please be advised that a satisfactory time test should not be construed as an approval to install an on-site disposal system. In evaluating the application, the Approving Authority shall consider the following: topography, geology, soil classification, hydrology, surface and subsurface drainage conditions, soil descriptions, the need for seasonal testing, the history of septic systems in the area, and the establishment of the required on-site disposal area.

In the event of inclement weather (rain or snow), please contact the Health Department to verify or reschedule appointments.

For additional information on the soil testing process, please visit our website at:  
[www.harfordcountyhealth.com](http://www.harfordcountyhealth.com).

Questions concerning percolation tests applications, scheduling, or test results should be directed to the Harford County Health Department, Bureau of Environmental Health at 410-877-2300.

V4 Rev. 9/2020