

PROPOSED CHANGES TO PUBLIC HEALTH FEES

ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS AND NON-CONVENTIONAL ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, Environmental Health Division (EH), is proposing changes to the Los Angeles County Code, Title 8 – Consumer Protection, Business, and Wage Regulations; Division 1 – Public Health Licenses. These changes impact permit, plan check, and service fees that are collected under the authority of State and County Codes to carry out duties that protect public health and safety.

Overview of Program

EH Onsite Wastewater Treatment Program reviews proposed Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) designs or modifications, work plans, required covenants, geological records, and performs site and installation inspections prior to issuing final system design approvals. System design approvals may be submitted to the local Building and Safety Department to obtain building permits for proposed projects.

The State OWTS Policy sets wastewater treatment and monitoring standards and authorizes Regional Water Boards to allow local approval of OWTS through a Local Area Management Program (LAMP). Los Angeles County Code provides the regulations for properly designed and operated systems.

Responsibilities of the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Program include reviewing and approving plans for new or modified Conventional and Non-Conventional OWTS within unincorporated areas of Los Angeles County and designated cities that have signed the County's LAMP MOU. These cities include Agoura Hills, Bradbury, Duarte, Glendora, Hidden Hills, La Cañada Flintridge, La Habra Heights, La Verne, Lomita, Lancaster, Palmdale, Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, and Santa Clarita.

Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS), also known as septic systems, are used to treat wastewater that is contaminated by human use, typically from homes and businesses in suburban and rural locations, and then released into the environment. OWTS are underground structures that treat and dispose of wastewater on-site, instead of being transported to a treatment plant.

Non-Conventional Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (NOWTS), treat effluent with one or more tanks combined with one or more additional treatment components, before the remaining liquid moves into a drain-field area or distribution system. The additional treatment components may include systems that reduce the nitrogen concentration of the effluent, provide disinfection, or both. High nitrogen concentrations in the discharged wastewater may harm the overall environment where the wastewater is being released.

Why are the fees changing now?

Fees were last increased in 2018. While fees have remained the same, operational costs have increased annually due to negotiated employee salaries and benefits, along with inflation. From FY 19/20 through

FY 25/26, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by about 25%, and cost-of-living increases approved for County workers totaled 20.5%. Yet fees have remained at 2018 levels despite these cost increases.

A comprehensive fee study was conducted along with an evaluation of current operational costs and the fee levels required to cover those costs. The study reviewed direct and indirect costs associated with program administration, inspection, oversight and enforcement. The fee analysis structure was validated by the LA County Auditor-Controller. The last comprehensive fee study for EH programs was conducted in 2011.

What are the fee changes?

A summary of the proposed fees is listed below. If approved by the Board of Supervisors, the new fees will go into effect December 15, 2026. Existing permitted businesses will receive a supplemental invoice for any increases in annual health permit fees for Fiscal Year 26/27, and existing businesses where annual permit fee decreased will receive a credit during the FY27/28 annual health permit billing.

To minimize the impact of future increases, starting in FY 27/28, fees will be adjusted annually based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), with no fee exceeding the reasonable cost of providing services.

SUMMARY OF ONSITE AND NON-CONVENTIONAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS FEES

PERMIT TYPES	Current Fee	Proposed New Fee
SEWAGE PUMPING VEHICLE A vehicle equipped with a storage tank and vacuum pump used to collect sewage, sludge, or wastewater from septic tanks, grease traps, portable toilets, or sewer systems and transport it to an approved disposal or treatment facility	\$209	\$218
SEWAGE PUMPING VEHICLE OPERATOR A company which operates multiple sewage pumping vehicles.	\$124	\$143
TOILET RENTAL AGENCY A business that rents and services portable toilets for temporary use	\$547	\$240
ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS CONVENTIONAL	\$5	\$5
ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS NON-CONVENTIONAL	\$43	\$43

PLAN CHECK FEES	Current Fee	Proposed New Fee
OWTS NEW OR REPLACEMENT The review of plans and supporting documents for a new or replacement Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) or NOWTS	\$1,528	\$2,691
NOWTS NEW OR REPLACEMENT	\$1,986	\$2,736

OWTS/NOWTS MOD DESIGNATION OF FUTURE EXPANSION AREA - NO PRIOR APPROVAL To review system evaluation document and plans for an existing OWTS/NOWTS which requires a new drainfield or seepage pit	\$522	\$1,626
OWTS/NOWTS MOD DESIGNATION OF FUTURE EXPANSION AREA - WITH PRIOR APPROVAL	\$447	\$1,413
OWTS PRE-COASTAL COMMISSION APPROVAL Review of plans for an OWTS/NOWTS prior to project approval by the Coastal Commission	\$1,528	\$2,114
NOWTS PRE-COASTAL COMMISSION APPROVAL	\$1,986	\$2,400
OWTS POST COASTAL COMMISSION APPROVAL Review of plans for an OWTS or NOWTS after approval by the Coastal Commission and to complete installation inspections	\$451	\$1,195
NOWTS POST COASTAL COMMISSION	\$451	\$1,510
OWTS TANK REPLACEMENT W/O RECORDS Review and approval of plans for the replacement of an OWTS tank	NEW	\$1,107
OWTS TANK REPLACEMENT WITH RECORDS	NEW	\$1,052
NOWTS TANK REPLACEMENT W/O RECORDS Review and approval of plans for the replacement of a NOWTS tank	NEW	\$1,880
NOWTS TANK REPLACEMENT WITH RECORDS	NEW	\$1,769

FEE COMPARISON BY COUNTY

The proposed fees are consistent with those of comparable jurisdictions when accounting for differences in scale and scope. Given Los Angeles County's large population and extensive inspection and service responsibilities, the proposed fees are appropriately aligned with comparable jurisdictions.

PERMIT FEES	LOS ANGELES PROPOSED NEW FEE	LONG BEACH	ORANGE	VENTURA	SAN DIEGO
SEWAGE PUMPING VEHICLE	\$218	\$379	\$365	\$292	\$211

Visit our website to learn more about [Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems](#).

How to provide feedback

Questions and comments can be submitted to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/EHfees> or scan the QR code.

