

**15A NCAC 18A .1955 DESIGN INSTALLATION CRITERIA FOR CONVENTIONAL SEWAGE SYSTEMS**

(a) Conventional septic tank systems shall utilize a septic tank of approved construction with an approved effluent filter and support case, access devices, and design volume which provides primary treatment of the sewage in accordance with the provisions of these Rules. The effluent filter support case shall be solvent welded to a PVC Schedule 40 outlet pipe with a minimum diameter of three inches inserted through the outlet connective sleeve creating a watertight and mechanically sound joint and shall extend at least 24 inches beyond the tank outlet. The filter and support case shall be installed and maintained in accordance with the filter manufacturer's specifications. The effluent filter shall be accessible without the operator entering the septic tank and removable by hand. The effluent filter shall be secured in the support case and located under the outlet access opening or manhole. When the top of the septic tank or access manhole is installed below finished grade, the location of each access opening or manhole shall be visibly marked at finished grade. The visible marker(s) shall be located over or within a five foot radius of each access opening or manhole. The marker(s) shall be identified as a septic tank locator. When not placed over each access opening or manhole, the marker(s) shall indicate location of tank access opening(s) or manhole(s). The filtered effluent from the septic tank shall be conveyed to an approved nitrification line where the soil provides for final treatment and disposal of the sewage.

(b) Table II shall be used in determining the maximum long-term acceptance rate for septic tank systems of conventional trench design. The long-term acceptance rate shall be based on the most hydraulically limiting naturally occurring soil horizon within three feet of the ground surface or to a depth of one foot below trench bottom, whichever is deeper.

TABLE II

SOIL GROUP	SOIL TEXTURE CLASSES (USDA CLASSIFICATION)		LONG-TERM ACCEPTANCE RATE gpd/ft <sup>2</sup>
I	Sands (With S or PS structure and clay mineralogy)	Sand Loamy Sand	1.2 - 0.8
II	Coarse Loams (With S or PS structure and clay mineralogy)	Sandy Loam Loam	0.8 - 0.6
III	Fine Loams (With S or PS structure and clay mineralogy)	Sandy Clay Loam Silt Loam Clay Loam Silty Clay Loam Silt	0.6 - 0.3
IV	Clays (With S or PS structure and clay mineralogy)	Sandy Clay Silty Clay Clay	0.4 - 0.1

The long-term acceptance rate shall not exceed the mean rate for the applicable soil group for food service facilities, meat markets, and other places of business where accumulation of grease can cause premature failure of a soil absorption system. Long-term acceptance rates up to the maximum for the applicable soil group may be permitted for facilities where data from comparable facilities indicates that the grease and oil content of the effluent will be less than 30 mg/l and the chemical oxygen demand (COD) will be less than 500 mg/l.

(c) The design daily sewage flow shall be divided by the long-term acceptance rate to determine the minimum area of nitrification trench bottom. The total length of the nitrification line shall be determined by dividing the required area of nitrification trench bottom by the trench width, not to exceed 36 inches. Trenches shall be located not less than three times the trench width on centers with a minimum spacing of five feet on centers.

(d) The local health department may permit the use of a bed system on sites where the soil texture can be classified into either Soil Groups I, II, or III, meeting the other requirements of this Section, and only on lots which are limited by topography, space, or other site-planning considerations. In such cases, the number of square feet of bottom area needed shall be increased by 50 percent over what would be required for a trench system. Nitrification lines shall be at least 18 inches from the side of the bed and shall have lines on three-foot centers. When the design daily flow exceeds 600 gallons per day, bed systems shall not be used.

(e) The pipe or tubing used between the septic tank and the nitrification line shall be a minimum of three-inch nominal size Schedule 40 polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polyethylene (PE), or acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene (ABS) or equivalent with a minimum fall of one-eighth inch per foot. However, three-inch or greater nonperforated polyethylene (PE) corrugated tubing may be substituted for Schedule 40 pipe between a distribution device and the nitrification line if the following conditions are met:

- (1) the trench has a minimum bottom width of one foot;
- (2) the trench bed is compacted, smooth, and at a uniform grade;
- (3) the pipe is placed in the middle of the trench with a minimum of three inches of clearance between the pipe and the trench walls;
- (4) washed stone or washed gravel envelope is placed in the trench on both sides of the pipe and up to a point at least two inches above the top of the pipe;
- (5) a minimum of six inches of soil cover is placed and compacted over the stone or gravel envelope; and
- (6) earthen dams consisting of two feet of undisturbed or compacted soil are placed at both ends of the trench separating the trench from the distribution device and the nitrification line.

All joints from the septic tank to the nitrification line shall be watertight.

(f) When four or six-inch diameter corrugated plastic tubing is used for nitrification lines, it shall be certified as complying with ASTM F 405, Standard Specification for Corrugated Polyethylene (PE) Tubing and Fittings, which is hereby adopted by reference in accordance with G.S. 150B-21.6. The corrugated tubing shall have three rows of holes, each hole between one-half inch and three-fourths inch in diameter, and spaced longitudinally approximately four inches on centers. The rows of holes may be equally spaced 120 degrees on centers around the periphery, or three rows may be located in the lower portion of the tubing, the outside rows being approximately on 120-degree centers. The holes may be located in the same corrugation or staggered in adjacent corrugations. Other types of pipe may be used for nitrification lines provided the pipe satisfies the requirements of this Section for hole size and spacing and the pipe has a stiffness equivalent to corrugated polyethylene tubing (ASTM F-405) or stronger. The nitrification line shall be located in the center of the nitrification trench.

(g) Nitrification trenches shall be constructed as level as possible but in no case shall the fall in a single trench bottom exceed one-fourth inch in 10 feet as determined by an engineer's level or equivalent. When surface slopes are greater than two percent, the bottom of the nitrification trenches shall follow the contour of the ground. An engineer's level or equivalent shall be used for installation and inspection. The nitrification trench shall not exceed a width of three feet and a depth of three feet, except as approved by the local health department.

(h) Rock used in soil absorption systems shall be clean, washed gravel or crushed stone and graded or sized in accordance with size numbers 3, 4, 5, 57, or 6 of ASTM D-448 (standard sizes of coarse aggregate) which is hereby adopted by reference in accordance with G.S.150B-21.6. Copies may be inspected in, and copies obtained from the Division of Environmental Health, P.O. Box 27687, Raleigh, North Carolina 27611-7687. The rock shall be placed a minimum of one foot deep with at least six inches below the pipe and two inches over the pipe and distributed uniformly across the trench bottom and over the pipe.

(i) The soil cover over the nitrification field shall be to a depth of at least six inches. The finished grade over the nitrification field shall be landscaped to prevent the ponding of surface water and runoff of surface water shall be diverted away from the nitrification field. Soil cover above the original grade shall be placed at a uniform depth over the entire nitrification field, except as required to prevent the ponding of surface water, and shall extend laterally five feet beyond the nitrification trench. The soil cover shall be placed over a nitrification field only after proper preparation of the original ground surface. The type of soil cover and placement shall be approved by the local health department.

(j) Effluent distribution devices, including distribution boxes, flow dividers, and flow diversion devices, shall be of sound construction, watertight, not subject to excessive corrosion, and of adequate design as approved by the local health department. Effluent distribution devices shall be separated from the septic tank and nitrification lines by a minimum of two feet of undisturbed or compacted soil and shall be placed level on a solid foundation of soil or concrete to prevent differential settlement of the device. The installer shall demonstrate that the distribution devices perform as designed.

(k) Grease traps or grease interceptors shall be required at food service facilities, meat markets, and other places of business where the accumulation of grease can cause premature failure of a soil absorption system. The following design criteria shall be met:

- (1) The grease trap shall be plumbed to receive all wastes associated with food handling and no toilet wastes;
- (2) The grease trap liquid capacity shall be sufficient to provide for at least five gallons of storage per meal served per day, or at least two-thirds of the required septic tank liquid capacity, or a capacity as determined in accordance with the following:

$$LC = D \times GL \times ST \times HR/2 \times LF$$

where	LC	=	grease trap liquid capacity (gallons)
	D	=	number of seats in dining area
	GL	=	gallons of wastewater per meal (1.5 single-service; 2.5 full service)
	ST	=	storage capacity factor = 2.5
	HR	=	number of hours open
	LF	=	loading factor = (1.25 interstate highway = 1.0 other highways and recreational areas = 0.8 secondary roads)

- (3) Two or more chambers must be provided, with total length-to-width ratio at least 2:1. Chamber opening and outlet sanitary tee must extend down at least 50 percent of the liquid depth.
  - (4) Access manholes, with a minimum diameter of 24 inches, shall be provided over each chamber and sanitary tee. The access manholes shall extend at least to finished grade and be designed and maintained to prevent surface water infiltration. The manholes shall also have readily removable covers to facilitate inspection, filter maintenance, and grease removal.
  - (5) One tank or multiple tanks, in series, shall be constructed in accordance with Rules .1952, .1953, and .1954 of this Section, and the provisions of Paragraphs (k)(3) and (k)(4) of this Rule.
  - (6) Where it has been demonstrated that specially designed grease interceptors will provide improved performance, the grease trap liquid capacity may be reduced by up to 50 percent.
- (l) Stepdowns or drop boxes may be used where it is determined by the local health department that topography prohibits the placement of nitrification trenches on level grade. Stepdowns shall be constructed of two linear feet of undisturbed soil and constructed to a height which fully utilizes the upstream nitrification trench. Effluent shall be conveyed over the stepdown through nonperforated pipe or tubing and backfilled with compacted soil. Drop boxes shall be constructed so that the invert of the inlet supply pipe is one inch above the invert of the outlet supply pipe which is connected to the next lower drop box. The top of the trench outlet laterals, which allow effluent to move to the nitrification lines, shall be two inches below the invert of the outlet supply line. Area taken up by stepdowns and drop boxes shall not be included as part of the minimum area required for nitrification trench bottoms.
- (m) Nitrification trenches shall be installed with at least one foot of naturally occurring soil between the trench bottom and sapolite, rock, or any soil horizon unsuitable as to structure, clay mineralogy or wetness. If the separation between the bottom of the nitrification trench and any soil wetness condition is less than 18 inches, and if more than six inches of this separation consists of Group I soils, a low pressure pipe system shall be required.
- (n) If sewage effluent pumps are used, the applicable requirements of Rule .1952 of this Section shall apply.
- (o) Collection sewers shall be designed and constructed in accordance with the following minimum criteria:
- (1) Building drains and building sewers shall be in accordance with the state plumbing code and approved by the local building inspector.
  - (2) Pipe material shall be specified to comply with the applicable ASTM standards, with methods of joining and other special installation procedures specified which are appropriate for the pipe to be used.
  - (3) Gravity sewers shall be designed to maintain scour velocities of at least two feet per second with the pipe half full and a minimum of one foot per second at the peak projected instantaneous flow rate. Force mains shall be sized to obtain at least a two-foot per second scour velocity at the projected pump operating flow rate.
  - (4) Infiltration and exfiltration shall not exceed 100 gallons per day per inch diameter per mile of gravity sewer pipe or 20 gallons per day per inch diameter per mile of pressure pipe in force mains and supply lines.
  - (5) Three-foot minimum cover shall be provided for all sewers unless ferrous material pipe is specified. Ferrous material pipe or other pipe with proper bedding to develop design-supporting strength shall be provided where sewers are subject to traffic-bearing loads.
  - (6) Manholes shall be used for sewers at any bends, junctions, and at least every 425 feet along the sewer lines. Drop manholes are required where the inlet to outlet elevation difference exceeds 2.5 feet. Manhole lids

shall be watertight if located below the 100-year flood elevation, within 100 feet of any public water supply source, or within 50 feet of any private water supply source or any surface waters classified WS-I, WS-II, WS-III, SA, SB, or B.

- (7) Cleanouts may be used instead of manholes for four-inch and six-inch sewers serving one or two buildings or as otherwise allowed by the North Carolina Plumbing Code. When used, cleanouts are required at least every 50 feet for four-inch sewers and every 100 feet for six-inch sewers and at all junctions and bends which exceed 45 degrees.
  - (8) Additional ventilation provisions may be required for collection sewers. Air relief valves shall be provided as needed for force mains.
- (p) Alternating dual field nitrification systems may be utilized where soils are limited by high clogging potentials (Soil Groups III and IV) and where the potential for malfunction and need for immediate repair is required. Alternating dual nitrification fields shall be designed with two complete nitrification fields, each sized a minimum of 75 percent of the total area required for a single field and separated by an effluent flow diversion valve. The diversion valve shall be constructed to resist 500 pounds crushing strength, structurally sound, and shall be resistant to corrosion. Valves placed below ground level shall be provided with a valve box and suitable valve stem so that they may be operated from the ground surface.

*History Note: Authority G.S. 130A-335 (e)(f)(f1)[2nd];  
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