

Non-Standard Septic System Reduced Annual Operational Permit Fee

WLS-016

Purpose: To inform those property owners who are in the Sonoma County non-standard septic system monitoring program about the availability of a reduced annual operational permit fee.

Background: Property owners in Sonoma county, who obtain a non-standard septic system permit, are required to obtain an Operational Permit and participate in the non-standard septic system monitoring program. Property owners in the monitoring program are required to pay an annual operational permit fee to the Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD). As an incentive for property owners to maintain their non-standard septic systems in good working order, PRMD has implemented a variable frequency inspection program which offers a Reduced Annual Fee Permit (RAFP). The RAFP is offered to property owners whose septic systems have at least a two consecutive year track record of acceptable operation.

Operational Permits are annual and expire on June 30 of each year. They can be issued at a reduced fee, and the reduced fee will remain in effect for as long as the septic system is maintained in an acceptable manner as determined by the County during a routine inspection. Currently there is a two year RAFP and a three year RAFP. Under a two year RAFP the fee will be reduced by 50% and the County will conduct a routine inspection every two years. Under a three year RAFP the fee will be reduced by 66% and the County will conduct a routine inspection every 3 years. Whether a site has the RAFP or not, the semi-annual self monitoring form is still required to be turned in. Failure to turn in a semi-annual self monitoring form could result in removal from a reduced fee. In addition, failure to pay the annual fee in a timely manner, resulting in a penalty fee, will result in removal from any opportunity to obtain a reduced fee for the following year.

The County shall employ the following criteria when determining if a Septic system qualifies for the RAFP:

One year permit:

One year permits are issued for newly installed nonstandard septic systems (less than two years old), or to new property owners of existing systems. The new property owner must show a 2 consecutive year track record of acceptable maintenance and monitoring in order to qualify for a reduced fee. These permits will be billed at the full fee.

Two year RAFP:

Two year Reduced Annual Fee Permits will be issued under the following circumstances: 1) the current property owner has been in the residence for a full two years, 2) has a current Operational Permit, 3) has performed at least 3 of the last 4 required self-monitoring inspections of the system, 4) has had only minor operational or maintenance problems with the system as determined by County staff during their routine inspection, and 5) has performed all necessary maintenance items when requested.

Three year RAFP:

Three year Reduced Annual Fee Permits will be issued under the following circumstances: 1) if the current property owner has been in the residence for a full two years, 2) has a current Operation Permit, 3) has accurately performed 4 of the last 4 required self-monitoring inspections on time, 4) has had only minor operational or maintenance problems with the system as determined by County staff during their routine inspection, and 5) has performed all required maintenance to the system.