



North Kingstown Wastewater Management District Ordinance Frequently Asked Questions

When did this Ordinance go into effect?

The *North Kingstown Wastewater Management District Ordinance* (NKRO Chapter 8 Article VIII.) was adopted by the North Kingstown Town Council in 1999.

What's the reason for this Ordinance?

The Ordinance was designed specifically to protect public health and the environment. In particular, the vital groundwater aquifers that provide us with our drinking water, Narragansett Bay and its many coves and harbors, as well as the numerous surface water bodies, the lakes and ponds that dot the landscape in town. Additionally the ordinance is protective of the large financial investment represented in a properly functioning septic system. North Kingstown was divided into risk-based districts in order to make the process more manageable. You can learn more about these districts on the NK Water Dept. page within the Town website.

Why haven't I gotten these reminder postcards in years past?

About a year and a half ago North Kingstown began using the RI Wastewater Information System program (RIWIS). The program was developed by Carmody Management Services, working along with the RI Department of Environmental Management, the University of Rhode Island and a number of RI communities.

RIWIS allows the member communities to track septic system maintenance and inform their residents regarding their septic systems using a web-based database. It is through this new database that the postcards are generated.

What do I have to do?

The ordinance requires property owners to have their septic systems inspected once every three years and pumped when the volume of solids in the septic tank reaches 50%. Inspections must be performed by a Town-approved Inspector. The Town will accept proof of septic system pump out in lieu of an inspection and pump out can be done by anyone in the business.

How long do I have to get it done?

Technically, if you have not had your system inspected or pumped within the last three years, you are not in compliance with the Ordinance and may be subject to a fine. The Town understands that this may be new to many property owners and is not, at this time, intent on imposing fines. Please comply as soon as you possibly can!

How often do I need to get it done?

A new pump-out or inspection will need to be performed three years from the date of the last one.

(Turn Over)

What do they do during an inspection?

An inspection, as defined in the ordinance, consists of a visual survey of the system components focusing on obvious problems or deficiencies and a measurement of the septic tank contents to determine if and when pumping is needed.

Why do I have to use "Town-approved Inspectors"?

Town approved inspectors are required to take specific inspector training courses offered by the University of Rhode Island and pass a test as proof of competence. Additionally they are required to carry liability insurance to protect both the property owners and the Town of North Kingstown. A list of inspectors is available on the website at www.northkingstown.org or we can mail you a copy. Call the Water Department to have one mailed to you.

Why do I have to send you the pump-out receipt, why can't the company that did the work provide you with the receipt?

The ordinance places that responsibility specifically upon the property owner. Some pump-out firms will do this as a courtesy if asked however the responsibility to provide proof of compliance still remains the property owner.

What will happen if I refuse or can't afford to do this now?

The ordinance does allow for a daily fine of up to \$500.00.

The ground is frozen and the tank/cesspool is inaccessible, can I wait?

In such situations it is acceptable to hold off until the ground thaws. However, the work should be accomplished as soon as it is feasible.

This is only a summer house; do I still have to comply?

Yes, all properties served by onsite wastewater treatment systems are covered by the ordinance. In this case an inspection, which is less costly, may be the appropriate course of action.

I live here by myself; do I still have to comply?

Yes all properties served by onsite wastewater treatment systems are subject to the ordinance. In this case an inspection, which is less costly, may be the appropriate course of action.

How much will this cost me?

Although it is impossible to answer this exactly as there are many variables that can affect cost, at this time (March 2009) the costs for a pumpout begin at 190-200 dollars for a 1000 gallon tank and the costs for an inspection range from 75-100 dollars. It is appropriate and advisable to call around for estimates of cost.