



Septic Site Evaluation

The first step to obtain approval for a new on-site septic system requires an examination of the soil profile in test pits dug in the ground where any proposed drainfield is to be located, along with consideration of other property characteristics including parcel size, slope, location of wells, adjacent water bodies, etc.

The site visit allows the Multnomah County Sanitarian to determine whether the site is suitable for an onsite septic system and if so, the type best suited for the site. Once the site visit has been completed, a Site Evaluation Report (SER) will be written describing what type of system is approved for the site.

Septic Site Evaluation process for **NEW** & **ALTERATION** proposals:

The SER report is written after the soils evaluation and establishes what type of system is best suited for the site. After a site receives an approved SER, the next step is to obtain a new construction Septic Installation permit. The fee for the installation permit will be based on the type of system required by the SER.

A completed Septic Evaluation application package will need to be submitted that includes the Authorizing Representative form (*if applicant is not the property owner*) **ALL** application checklist items listed on the front and back of the Evaluation application form, current fee and \$100 DEQ Surcharge.

Below are the steps to complete the SER process

STEP 1. Dig the Test Pit (holes)

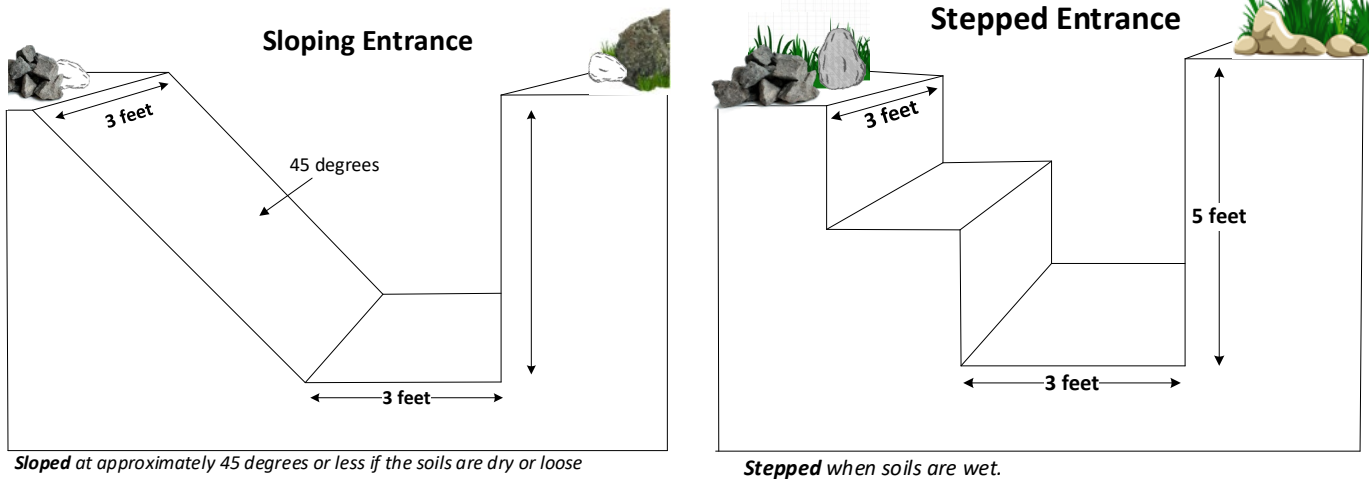
Dig a minimum of two (2) test pits (holes) in the areas where the primary and repair drainfields are planned and/or the areas with the best soil. Complex lots may require additional test pits to achieve an approval. The test pits allow the inspector to test and examine the soil and soil layers and will help determine if it is appropriate to proceed with construction.

Preparation of the Test Pits (*see Specification Illustration on pg 2*)

To provide for stabilization and safe access, standard test pits for a site evaluation must be prepared in the following manner:

- The bottom of the pit must be at least 3 feet wide and 3 feet long.
- The depth must be at least 4.5 feet and not exceed 5 feet.
- The pits must be stepped or sloped back at one end to allow access.
- In some instances, pits may only need to be excavated to the layer of hard rock or to the water table if that layer is less than 5 feet.
- Dig the first test pit in the center of the primary drainfield area.
- Dig the second test pit in the center of the replacement drainfield area.
- The test pits must be a minimum of 75 feet apart.

Test Pit Specification Illustrations



STEP 2. Submittal Requirements:

1. A completed [Septic Evaluation Application](#) marked for the Site Evaluation Report NEW & ALTERATION (up to 600 gal), and the completed [Authorized Representative form](#) (if applicant is not the property owner). A complete application submittal must include **ALL** the items listed on the front and back of the application form, current fee and DEQ surcharge.
2. A **scaled site plan** (no larger than 11" x 17") showing **ALL** items listed on the front and back of the application including:
 - a. The location of at least 2 test pits (minimum) located at least 75' apart and triangulated on the site plan by showing distances from neighboring property lines and each other. (i.e.: 1 distance from north property line, 1 distance from west property line & distance between pits = triangulation. See [SAMPLE Test Pit Site Plan example, page 4](#)).
 - b. All existing and/or proposed:
 - Structures, driveways, access roads, etc.
 - Private wells on site and within 100' of the property lines (including neighboring properties).
 - Water lines from the water source.
 - Steep banks, creeks, streams, or roadside ditches within 100' from any part of the proposed septic system.

Once the completed [Septic Evaluation application](#) package has been submitted and fees paid, the SER will be reviewed, and the applicant will be contacted to schedule an anticipated date for the test pit evaluation and to ensure the test pits have been dug and are ready for the site visit*.

After the test pit evaluation is completed, a report will be written documenting the findings and describing what type of system is suitable. If for some reason the test pits are denied, you will have 90 days to dig more pits for evaluation with no additional fees.

***NOTE:** *The only work allowed for an issued SER is digging the test pits. This does not permit the installation of an onsite sewage disposal system.*

A licensed DEQ installer can assist in preparing plans and materials. Asking neighbors who they have used for installation of their systems is often helpful.

Septic Site Evaluation process for REPAIR proposals:

See requirements for a New Site Evaluation (*above*) with the following exceptions:

Step 1. Dig ONE Test Pit (hole)

- Dig a minimum of one test pit (hole) in the location where the repair drainfield is proposed and/or the area with the best soil. (*See Test Pit Specification Illustration on pg 2*)

Step 2. Submittal Requirements:

1. A completed [Septic Evaluation Application](#) marked for the Site Evaluation Report **REPAIR** (up to 600 gal), and the completed [Authorized Representative form](#) (*if applicant is not the property owner*). A complete application submittal must include **ALL** the items listed on the front and back of the application form, current fee and \$100 DEQ surcharge.
2. A **scaled site plan** (*no larger than 11" x 17"*) showing **ALL** items listed on the front and back of the application including:
 - a. The location of at least 1 test pits (minimum) triangulated on the site plan by showing distances from neighboring property lines and each other.
~ (*i.e.: 1 distance from north property line, 1 distance from west property line & 1 distance from structure = triangulation. See [Example Test Pit Site Plan, page 4](#)*).
 - b. All existing and/or proposed:
 - Structures, driveways, access roads, etc.
 - Private wells on site and within 100' of the property lines (*including neighboring properties*).
 - Water lines from the water source.
 - Steep banks, creeks, streams, or roadside ditches within 100' from any part of the proposed septic system.
 - Stormwater disposal location.

Once the [Septic Evaluation application](#) package for the REPAIR has been submitted and fees paid, the SER will be reviewed and the applicant will be contacted with an anticipated date for the test pit evaluation.

After the test pit evaluation is completed, a report will be written documenting the findings and describing what type of system is suitable. If for some reason the test pits are denied, you will have 90 days to dig more pits for evaluation with no additional fees.

****NOTE: The only work allowed for an issued SER is digging the test pits. This does not permit the installation of an onsite sewage disposal system.***

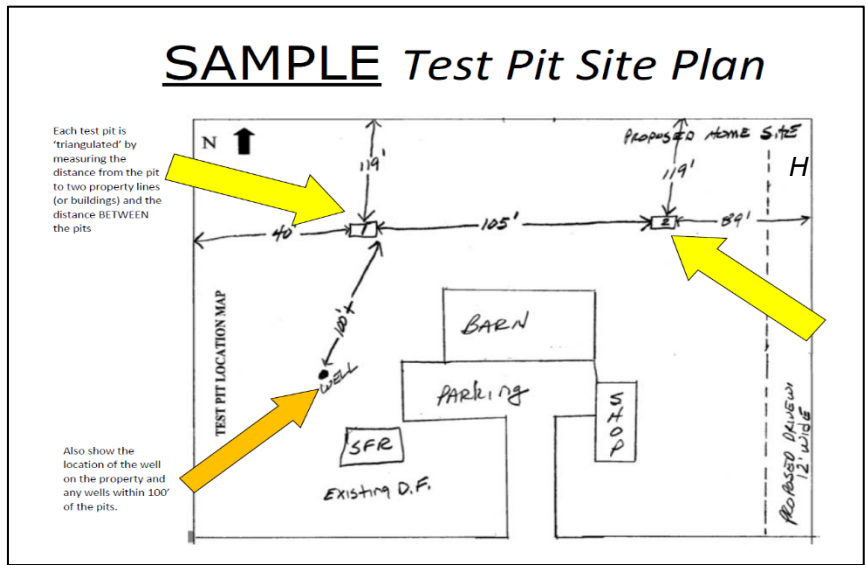
After the Septic Evaluation has been completed and a Site Evaluation Report (SER) written describing the type of septic system best suited for the site, a [Septic Installation Permit](#) may be applied for.

A licensed DEQ installer can assist in preparing plans and materials. Asking neighbors who they have used for installation of their systems is often helpful.

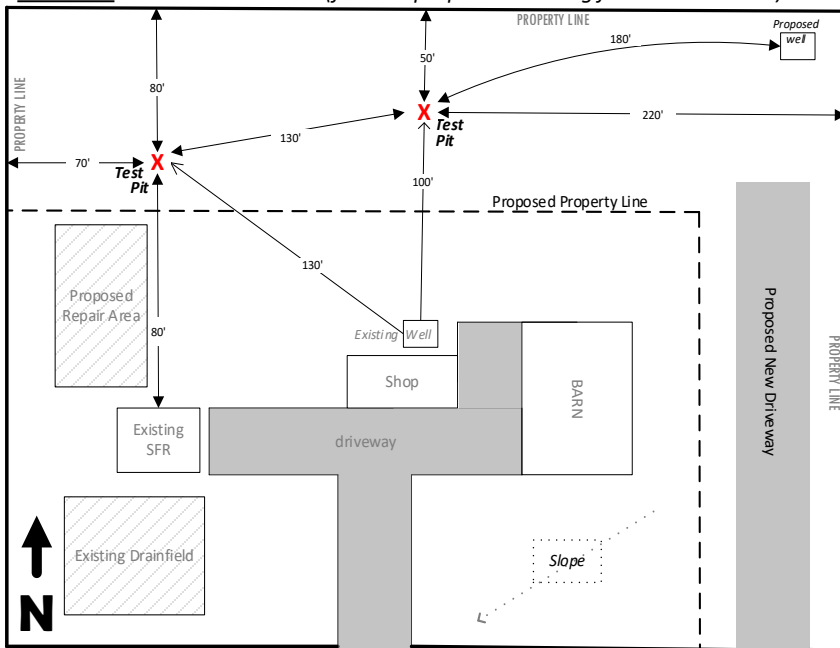
*Site Visit/Inspections for Site Evaluations are scheduled as follows:

East county on Wednesdays & Fridays || West county on Tuesdays & Thursdays

Examples of Test Pit Site Plans –

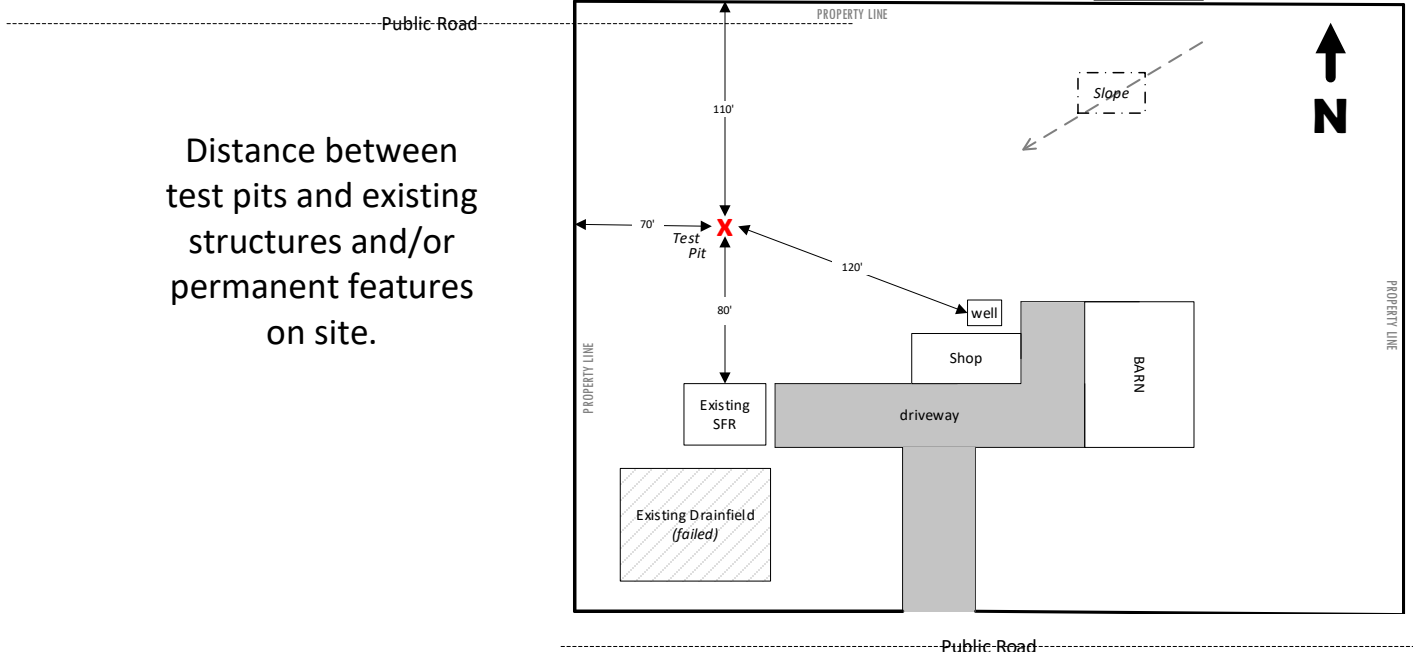


SAMPLE Test Pit Site Plan (for new proposal resulting from land division)



Site Plans do not have to be fancy; however, they must show the distances between test pit(s) and property lines

SAMPLE REPAIR Test Pit Site Plan



Distance between test pits and existing structures and/or permanent features on site.