

Onsite Sewage Systems Operation & Maintenance – Protecting Investments, Ground Water, and Public Health

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Abstract: Clark County's Operation and Maintenance (O&M) program for Onsite Sewage Systems (OSS) was initiated in 1995. The O&M program experienced some success during its first 12 years with limited resources and very little enforcement. In 2007, the Clark County Board of Health adopted new OSS rules and regulations that strengthened the O&M requirements. As a result, the OSS team developed a logic model that provided clear guidance, focus and direction for the O&M program.

Four program components were identified: 1) education and social marketing, 2) data maintenance and record keeping 3) professional certification and performance evaluation and 4) compliance. Program mission, goals and performance measures were established.

Since the code was adopted, O&M inspections conducted by Certified O&M Specialists have increased by 60 percent. Of the 11,108 septic systems inspected since October 2007:

- 3,739 systems (33 percent) had problems that could have led to failure had they not been caught early enough to be corrected.
- 255 of these systems (2.5 percent) had critical deficiencies that are likely to result in a public health hazard.

Clark County's O&M program is doing what it was intended to do-help homeowners catch early signs of septic failure and strengthen groundwater protection in Clark County.