



**MY SEWAGE PERMIT WAS DENIED –
NOW WHAT DO I DO ?**

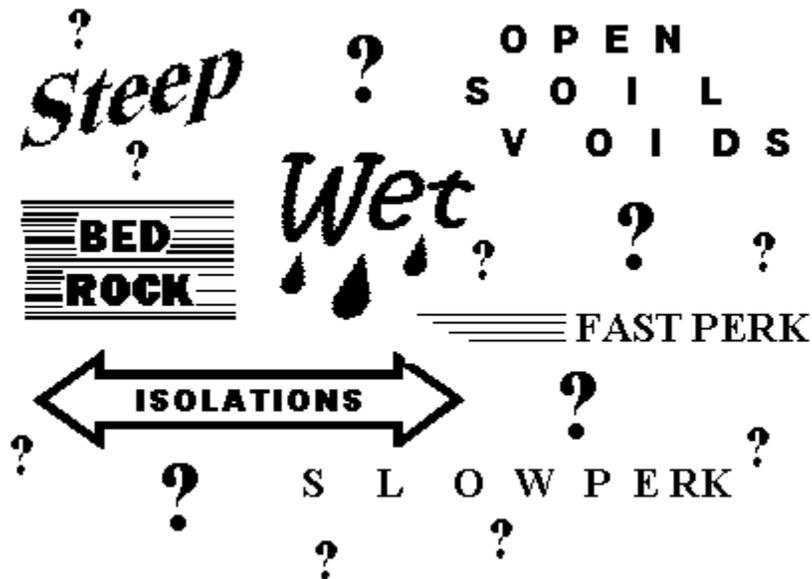


A BRIEF LOOK INTO THE OPTIONS AVAILABLE AFTER PERMIT DENIAL

The purpose of this document is to assist the property owner whose sewage permit was denied in exploring the options that may be available to obtain a sewage permit. This document should not be considered a substitute for qualified professional assistance and the property owner is advised to consult an attorney, civil engineer, or soil scientist, as appropriate, for guidance.

Why was my permit denied?

The Pennsylvania sewage regulations set specific criteria that must be met in order to obtain a sewage permit. The criteria vary by system type but generally include a minimum amount of usable soil, a passing percolation test, suitable isolation from various features, suitable slope, and an area big enough to site the system. If the site fails to meet any one of the criteria, the permit will be denied.



IMPORTANT:

Permit denial does not mean that the property is “unbuildable”. It means that the areas of the property tested are not suitable for the system type applied for.

Why did the test fail ?

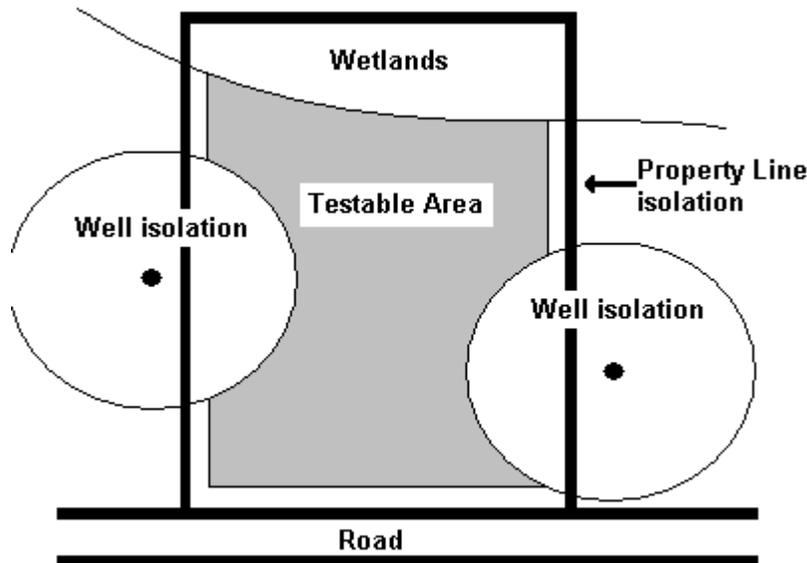
The first step is to find out why the permit denied. The official letter of permit denial would outline the reasons the permit was denied.

In Dingman Township, the most common reason for denial is *lack of usable soil*. This means that the soil probe test found that there was not enough soil for the particular system tested for. The proper amount of soil is necessary to renovate the sewage effluent. Otherwise the unrenovated effluent may eventually pollute the ground water.

Rarely a permit may be denied for failing the percolation test. This means that although there may be a suitable soil depth, the effluent would move through the soil too rapidly to ensure renovation. Conversely, the test could fail for being too slow. In such a case, the sewage would probably back up into the house.

Excessive slope is another common reason for permit denial. Each system type has maximum slope criteria that must be met. Placing a system on greater slopes risks the sewage leaking out of the ground.

Finally, there are isolation distances that must be met from various land features. Most, such as isolations from surface waters and wells, are intended to protect the public health. Others, such as setbacks from roads, are intended to protect the system.

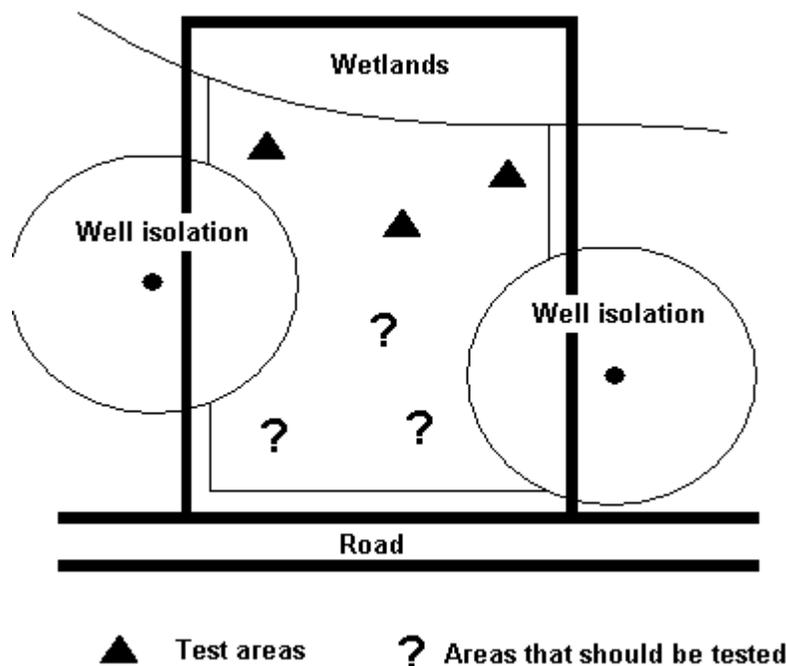


Was the entire property tested ?

Look at the property. Was the entire property tested? If not, you should call the testing company to find out why. If the potential buyer had the property tested, they may have given the testing company specific instructions to test only certain areas. For example, many buyers do not want the sewage disposal system in the front yard. The testing company that they hired will only test in the rear yard. That does not mean the front yard is unsuitable. Only that the front yard was not tested. The obvious next step would be to test the areas of the property that were not previously tested.

Even without specific testing instructions, there may be legitimate reasons certain portions of the property were not tested. Areas that are wetlands (or just outside wetlands), rock outcroppings, or areas that violate the state mandated isolations are often not tested. However, you should require that the testing company provide you with the reason that those areas were not tested.

IMPORTANT:	The Township Sewage Enforcement Officer <u>does not</u> determine where the testing will take place. The determination on where to conduct the test is made by the testing company hired by the property owner or the buyer.
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Available Sewage Options

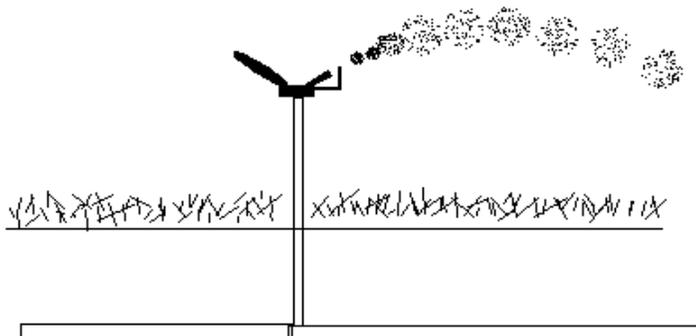
When you know why the permit was denied and you know that all areas of the property have been tested, you should take a look at the options that are available.

IMPORTANT:	It is not the Township's duty to find a way to get you a sewage permit. It is the property owner's duty to find a way for their property to get a lawful means of sewage disposal.
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1. Consider the Use of an Alternate System

The Pennsylvania D.E.P. has approved numerous alternate systems that may be used in place of conventional systems. Many of the systems were intended to overcome obstacles that would cause sites to fail the testing for conventional systems. For example, 20 inches of usable soil is required to permit an elevated sandmound system. There are now three alternate systems that only require 10 inches. Some alternate systems are smaller in area allowing them to be squeezed into smaller areas. Others can be placed on steeper slopes.

Alternate systems do have their drawbacks. They may require additional testing and some may cost more than a conventional system. There are also some situations that cannot be cured by using an alternate system.



Spray Irrigation may often be placed in wetlands

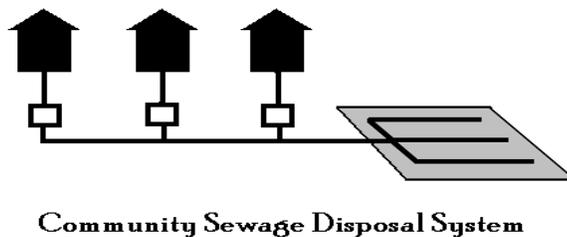
2. Consider Putting Your Sewage Disposal System on Another Property

Even if your property fails the sewage testing, the neighboring property may be able to pass. If so, you could consider buying it and placing the house on one lot and the sewage system on the other. The second lot need not be immediately adjoining the first. If the road owner (community association, etc.) is willing to grant you an easement to run your pipe under the road, the second property may be across the street or even down the block. While this may not be practical for most property owners, it is often a good choice for people owning expensive lakefront property.



3. Consider the Use of a Community System

When one property fails it is common for neighboring properties to fail. In such cases it may make sense to look into the use of a community system. A community system is a conventional sewage disposal system sized for two or more houses. Property owners banding together could purchase the nearest "passing" property. Dividing the cost between three or four property owners makes the solution more affordable than buying the property for just one house (see #2 above).



4. Consider the Use of a Sewage Disposal System that Does Not Use Soil to Renovate the Effluent

If your property does not have enough usable soil, you could consider a sewage disposal system that does not need soil. Presently, there are two options available. The first is a non-infiltration evapotranspiration bed contained in a greenhouse. The only evapotranspiration system that is approved at this time is designed by Sundrive Inc. The system uses evaporation and the transpiration of plants to renovate the sewage effluent.

The second option is a Small Flow Treatment Facility (SFTF). Essentially, an SFTF is a miniature sewage treatment plant intended to serve only one house. SFTF's are designed by civil engineers. There are as many ways of designing the SFTF's as there are engineers designing them. SFTF's require an discharge point such as a stream or an approved ditch. Once through the planning and permitting process, the construction of an SFTF is usually not much more expensive than a conventional system.



A Small Flow Treatment Facility
Septic Tank to Sandfilter to Chlorinator to Stream

5. Consider Correcting the Property's Flaws.

If your property does not have enough usable soil, you can consider creating enough soil. It can be as simple as placing soil on the ground, waiting four years, then retesting. There are some risks involved. Problems can occur if you use soil that is contaminated with redoximorphic features (soil mottling), don't use enough soil, or place the soil in a way that allows it to wick ground water upward. For that reason it is recommended that you have a soil scientist design the soil pile.

Other property flaws can also be corrected. If the only good sewage site would violate the isolation to a neighbor's water well, offer to move the

well. While the neighbor is under no obligation to let you move the well, you won't know unless you ask. (And yes, it has happened before.) Areas too small to place a sewage system have been increased by neighbors shifting property lines. Ditches can be filled and re-dug in another location.



Elevated Sandmound on Controlled Fill
With Upslope Ditch

Information and Resources

For Information about the Sewage Regulations:

Dingman Township Sewage Enforcement Officer
118 Fisher Lane
Milford, PA 18337

(570 296 – 9260

Office Hours: 9 – 10:30 AM

For a List of Soil Scientists:

Pennsylvania Association of Professional Soil Scientists
P.O. Box 61035
Harrisburg, PA 17106-1035

For a List of Sewage Testing Firms, Excavating Companies, or Civil Engineers:

Pike County Chamber of Commerce

(570) 296 – 8700

Pike County Builder's Association

(570) 296 - 9200

For a List of Wetlands Delineators:

Pike County Conservation District

(570) 226 – 8220

To Learn Who Owns a Property Adjoining Your Property:

Pike County Mapping Office

506 Broad Street

Milford, PA 18337

(570) 296 – 7744

For Location of Buried Utilities:

Pennsylvania One – Call System

1 – 800 – 242 – 1776

IMPORTANT:

Pennsylvania Law requires that you call the Pennsylvania One – Call System to have buried utilities marked at least 3 days before you dig.