DEFINITIONS

Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (POWTS) – Sewage treatment and disposal system serving a structure with a septic tank and soil absorption field, holding tank, mound system, sand filter system, aerobic treatment unit, or any system that the Department may approve.

Privy – A structure which has no plumbing or water under pressure and the primary use is to contain human wastes.

Portable Restroom – A self-contained portable unit that includes fixtures, incorporating holding tank facilities, designed to contain human excrement.

Sanitary Permit – A permit issued by the department or issuing agent for the installation of a private sewage system.

Transfer/Sale of Property – Any conveyance of ownership of a parcel of land for which a transfer fee is collected.

Wisconsin Fund – A state program to assist with reimbursement of failing POWTS if criteria are met.

OVERVIEW

The Taylor County Zoning Department regulates all private sewage systems under requirements from the State of Wisconsin. The purpose of Section 32.11 of Taylor County Code is to identify failing systems and to protect new property owners from obtaining failing POWTS that may cause public health concerns with bacterial and viral diseases caused by untreated effluent. Replacing failing systems will reduce additional nutrient runoff that causes contamination in both ground and surface water, keeping our lakes, streams and drinking water clean and clear.

Additional information may be obtained on the Taylor County website or contacting the Taylor County Zoning Department at 715-748-1485.
Taylor County Code 32.11 (1) A complete evaluation of an existing private onsite wastewater treatment system is required prior to the transfer of property or land division on which there is one or more structure(s) served by a private onsite wastewater treatment system(s).

Typical Types of Systems Installed in Taylor County Wisconsin

- In-Ground Soil Absorption
- At-Grade Soil Absorption
- Mound
- Holding Tank

Wisconsin Statutes defines a FAILING PRIVATE SEWAGE SYSTEM as, “one which causes or results in any of the following conditions”:

- The discharge of sewage into surface or groundwater
- The introduction of sewage into zones of saturation which adversely affects the operation of a private sewage system
- The discharge of sewage to drain tile or into zones of bedrock
- The discharge of sewage to the surface of the ground
- The failure to accept sewage discharges and back up of sewage into the structure served by the private sewage system

What is the purpose of an existing POWTS evaluation at time of sale?

It will identify failing systems before a change in ownership, protecting the new property owner. Repairing or replacing failing POWTS reduces groundwater & surface water contamination while protecting public health.

My system is “grandfathered” in, right?

Whether your system was installed in 1940 or 2013, if your POWTS meets any of the definitions of a failing system it needs to be repaired or replaced.

Who can evaluate my POWTS?

The evaluation must be completed by a licensed or certified person for the State of Wisconsin; most will be master plumbers or POWTS inspectors/maintainers.

I just installed my sanitary system; do I need an evaluation before I transfer ownership?

If a POWTS was installed less than 5 years prior to transfer or an existing POWTS Evaluation was accepted by the Department less than 5 years prior to transfer an evaluation report may not be required. You will still need to notify the department to verify the requirements are met and to receive an acceptance letter.

If the evaluation finds problems with my POWTS, will I have to replace the system before transfer of ownership?

No, it will be up to the seller and buyer to decide who will make the corrections, but dates will be set by the County to have issues completed by. It is only required that an existing POWTS evaluation be completed before transfer of ownership.

My system discharges in the road ditch, I know it is failing. Do I still need an evaluation completed before transfer?

No, the Zoning Department has a form that will need to be signed by the seller and buyer to avoid having an evaluation report required for a failing system. The Zoning Department will then set up a schedule for the buyer to have a new system installed.

Is there any funding or grants to help replace my failed POWTS?

Yes, Taylor County participates in the Wisconsin Fund program. This is a state program that assists with reimbursement in replacing failed POWTS. There are requirements for eligibility for this program, contact the Zoning Department for more details.