



Wastewater Permit-to-Install (PTI) and Plan Approval

Anyone who plans to construct a wastewater collection, conveyance, storage, treatment or disposal facility must apply for and receive a wastewater permit-to-install (PTI) from Ohio EPA before beginning construction.

What is a permit-to-install?

The wastewater PTI grants approval for the construction of the wastewater treatment/collection system and outlines technical and design requirements for the system. Prior to beginning construction, the applicant must have the PTI from Ohio EPA in their possession.

Anyone who plans to construct a wastewater collection, conveyance, storage, treatment or disposal facility must apply for and receive a wastewater permit-to-install (PTI) from Ohio EPA before beginning construction. This includes facilities that handle wastewater from businesses, industries, commercial operations and almost any buildings other than one-, two- or three-family dwellings. If multiple homes connect to a common sewer or disposal system, a PTI is needed for the common sewer or disposal system. Facilities that handle sewage or industrial sludge must also obtain a PTI. Even non-discharging facilities, such as holding tanks, need a PTI.

What laws and rules apply?

The following laws and rules apply: Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Chapter 6111 and Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) Chapter 3745-42 and rule 3745-1-05.

When is a permit-to-install required?

A PTI is required prior to installing:

- Storage, treatment or disposal units for sewage or industrial wastewater unless specifically exempted in paragraph (B) of rule 3745-42-02 of the OAC;
- Sewer systems – including sewer extensions, pump stations, force mains and other devices designed to collect or convey sewage, industrial or other wastewater to storage, treatment or disposal facilities;
- Sludge collection, treatment or disposal;
- Pretreatment units (designed to reduce pollutants in industrial or commercial wastewater that will be discharged to a public sewer) unless specifically exempted in paragraph (B) of rule 3745-42-02 of the OAC; or
- Onsite systems for anything but a one-, two- or three-family dwelling, except where the local health board has chosen to regulate small-flow onsite sewage treatment systems. An onsite system that falls under the small-flow onsite sewage treatment system definition ($\leq 1,000$ gallons per day) may be required to obtain a permit through their local health department. For more information, go to: odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/eh/sewage/sewage1.aspx.

When is a permit-to-install not required?

A PTI is not required prior to:

- Installing storm sewers;
- Replacing existing equipment that is of equal size and capacity and will not add pollutants of a significantly different nature or amount to the system;
- Installing building drains or laterals that are pipelines to the common sewer (refer to Ohio EPA's *Permit-to-Install Requirements for Sanitary Sewer Projects* fact sheet); or
- Installing plumbing fixtures (primarily inside the building or less than 18 inches outside the building).

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A PTI or plan approval may not be required for the following:

- Treatment works including but not limited to pH neutralization, oil/water separators and silver recovery units where the design flow is less than 500 gallons per day and the effluent discharges to a publicly owned treatment works (POTW) with an effective National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit.
- Treatment components designed to collect and store fats, oils and grease (F.O.G.) where the peak design flow is less than 500 gallons per minute and the effluent discharges to a POTW with an effective NPDES permit.
- Specific site preparation activities including constructing buildings or structures that will not convey sewage to the proposed disposal system.
- A manhole, provided that it is located on a sewer lateral and upstream of any collector sewer, that includes not more than one influent pipe, and does not house any equipment, such as a pump.
- Specified recycle systems.

For a complete list of all exemptions and requirements, please refer to paragraph (B) in OAC 3745-42-02, Applicability, exemptions and procedures. For specific details or questions about a particular project, please contact the appropriate district office.

What are typical permit application requirements?

- Submission of engineering plans/design criteria. All submittals must have original signatures (no photocopies will be accepted) and be stamped and dated by a professional engineer (PE) registered in Ohio.
- Use of best available technology, best available demonstrated control technology or better technology.
- Conformance with Ohio EPA guidelines and policies, or justification for variance.
- Compliance with applicable effluent limits.
- If a discharge is proposed to a drainage way or stream, it must be in compliance with effluent limits as established in the NPDES permit.
- If a discharge is proposed to a publicly owned sanitary sewer system, it must be in compliance with locally issued permits.
- Operation and maintenance information.
- Specifics about the permit applicant holder and proposed project.
- Compliance with all applicable laws, rules and regulations – in particular, those that pertain to water pollution control.
- Original signatures of the owner(s) and the PE on the application forms (no photocopies will be accepted).

What are the permit fees?

Permit fees, which are non-refundable, include:

- application fee: \$100
- plan review fee: \$100 plus 0.65 percent of the estimated project cost with a maximum fee of \$15,000

Which projects are covered by the antidegradation rule?

A project or application must be further reviewed under the antidegradation rule if it pertains to:

- any proposed activity that would need a Section 401 certification (for instance, stream or wetland modification, dredge and fill activities, etc.); or
- an existing or proposed facility requesting to increase pollutants discharged to waters of the state.

The antidegradation review might require a more extensive evaluation of potential environmental, social and economic impacts. The rule also requires additional public notification and public involvement. Due to these requirements, antidegradation projects usually require more time to process than regular PTI projects.

What happens after Ohio EPA receives the application?

After receiving the PTI application, Ohio EPA will conduct an administrative review to make sure that the correct application forms, fees and detailed plans have been submitted. Ohio EPA staff will then conduct a technical review of the application and detailed plans to ensure conformance with current design standards. Additional information may be requested at this point.

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For projects with substantial public interest, Ohio EPA may send a news release to local media outlets announcing the receipt of application. In addition, Ohio EPA may hold a public hearing so that interested citizens may comment on the PTI application.

How can I track the progress of my application?

Once the application is determined to be administratively complete, the status of the application can be tracked on the Division of Surface Water's website at: epa.ohio.gov/dsw/pti/index.aspx.

What happens when the review is complete?

After the review is complete, Ohio EPA staff will develop a final recommendation on the PTI application and present it to the director. Based on the staff recommendation and information provided, the director may issue a final permit; issue a proposed denial; or request more information from the applicant.

Final and proposed actions are published in Ohio EPA's *Weekly Review*, which can be found online at epa.ohio.gov/Actions.aspx, and a legal notice is published in a newspaper of general circulation in the county where the project would be located. Ohio EPA may also issue a news release for projects with consideration public interest.

Director's actions may be appealed to the Environmental Review Appeals Commission (ERAC) or Ohio EPA's hearing examiner as appropriate. If the applicant is not satisfied with the outcome of the adjudication hearing or ERAC decision, additional appeals may be made through the civil courts.

Proposed Decisions

If the director issues a proposed denial, the appeal is made to Ohio EPA's hearing examiner. A request for an adjudication hearing with the hearing examiner should be made in writing and must specify the issues being contested.

The request must be made within 30 days of the director's action. Send requests to: Ohio EPA Hearing Clerk, P.O. Box 1049, Columbus, OH 43216-1049, or call (614) 644-2129.

Final Decisions

If the director's decision is final, an appeal may be made to ERAC pursuant to Section 3745.04 of the ORC. The appeal must be in writing and set forth the action complained of and the grounds upon which the appeal is based.

The appeal must be filed with ERAC within 30 days after notice of the director's action.

The appeal must be accompanied by a filing fee of \$70 which ERAC, in its discretion, may reduce by affidavit if the filer demonstrates that payment of the full amount would cause extreme hardship.

Notice of the filing of the appeal shall be filed with the director within three days of filing with ERAC. File the appeal with: Environmental Review Appeals Commission 77 South High Street, 17th Floor, Columbus, OH 43215. Phone: (614) 466-8950.

How long is the permit or plan approval valid?

PTIs or plan approvals are not usually issued for a specific period. However, by rule, the permit or plan approval will terminate 18 months after the date of issuance if construction activities have not begun. The applicant may request one 12-month extension of this deadline.

I want to start a home-based business. What do I need to do?

First you need to determine the type of sewage treatment system your home has and how the addition of a business will affect the system.

Existing Onsite Sewage Treatment System — Onsite systems are common in small, rural communities or in unsewered areas of larger cities. An onsite system might not be large enough to handle the increased flow created by the addition of restrooms, sinks and kitchen facilities for the business or the increased use of existing facilities. Also, onsite systems are designed to handle domestic wastewater with minimal amounts of solids.

Discharging chemicals and industrial wastes, such as paint thinners, acids or oils into an onsite system could cause premature failure of the system and contaminate the soil and underground drinking water. Therefore, the discharge of industrial wastes to an onsite system is prohibited.

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Before making any changes to your system, contact Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water to determine if the proposed changes would need a PTI from Ohio EPA and to ensure that your system meets Ohio EPA's requirements. Depending on the location and anticipated discharge from your facility, you may need to obtain permits from the local health department rather than Ohio EPA (see last bullet under When is a PTI required? on Page 1).

Existing Sanitary Sewer Connection — Usually when a home is connected to the sanitary sewer that flows to the local POTW, the process of converting to a business is much easier. Most of the time, the local wastewater plant will regulate the discharge of wastewater from a business. However, they might require that industrial wastewater be pretreated to remove metals, grease or other pollutants. You should contact the POTW to ensure that you meet any additional requirements they may have. If you need to construct pretreatment facilities, generally you must apply for a PTI from Ohio EPA.

What if I have an onsite system and will generate industrial wastewater from my business?

As previously stated, discharging industrial waste to an onsite system is prohibited. However, you may be able to install a holding tank with a high-water alarm to collect industrial wastewater. The holding tank would have to be pumped out periodically by a waste hauler and the contents sent to a POTW or a hazardous waste facility.

Installing a holding tank would be allowed only for industrial wastewater. Ohio EPA does not normally allow the use of holding tanks to collect domestic wastewater.

You must first determine whether tying into the city sewer is possible before Ohio EPA will consider or approve the installation of a holding tank. If installation is necessary, you must obtain a PTI from Ohio EPA.

Does an industry or commercial operation that discharges to the public sewer need a PTI to construct or modify pretreatment of their wastewater?

Most of the time, yes. In ORC 6111, a pretreatment system is defined as a disposal system, under the definition of both a sewerage system and treatment works.

Under OAC 3745-42-02(A)(1), the installation or modification of a disposal system requires a PTI. However, there are now specific exemptions for some small pretreatment systems contained in rule 3745-42-02(B) of the OAC.

I want to install a recycling system for my industrial wastewater. Do I need a PTI?

It depends. OAC 3745-42 requires a PTI for the installation of a treatment works as defined in division (G) of section 6111.01 of the ORC. The main purpose of a recycling system is to treat and reuse wastewater, making it a treatment works. Therefore, it is necessary to obtain a PTI for the installation or modification of wastewater recycling systems, unless they meet the criteria of the specific exemption listed in paragraph (B)(7) of rule 3745-42-02 of the OAC.

Glossary of Terms

Disposal System — A system for disposing of sewage, sludge, sludge materials, industrial waste or other wastes. Includes sewer systems and treatment works.

NPDES Permit — A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit is issued by Ohio EPA to anyone who wants to discharge wastewater into waters of the state. Applications for this permit must be approved by Ohio EPA before the discharges can occur.

POTW — A publicly owned treatment works (POTW) is a treatment plant that handles wastewater from homes and businesses. Most POTWs are owned and operated by a village, city or county. Wastewater is treated at the POTW and then discharged, usually to a stream, river or lake. Wastewater treatment systems that serve individual private, commercial or industrial facilities are not POTWs.

Onsite Sewage Treatment System (OSTS) — A system relying on natural processes and/or mechanical components that are used to collect, treat and disperse the wastewater to the soil in a manner that does not cause harm to the surrounding environment and human health. An onsite system is usually found in areas where sanitary sewers are unavailable.

Sanitary Sewer — A system of pipes that carries wastewater to a local POTW for treatment. Restrooms and sinks in many homes and businesses (especially in cities) are hooked up to the sanitary sewer.

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Sewer System — Pipelines or conduits, pump stations, force mains and all other constructions, devices and facilities used for collecting sewage, industrial waste or other wastes and transporting them to a point of disposal or treatment. This does not include plumbing fixtures, building drains, sub-drains, building sewers or building storm sewers.

Storm Sewer — A collection system for rainwater and snow melt runoff. These types of sewers may include the gutter systems that you see along streets and roads. Runoff collected in storm sewers travels directly into a ditch, stream, river or other body of water without being treated.

Treatment Works — Any plant, disposal field, lagoon, dam, pumping station or building sewer connected directly to treatment works, incinerator or other works that treat, stabilize, blend, compost or hold sewage, sludge, sludge materials, industrial waste or other wastes, except as otherwise defined.

Waters of the State — Water bodies such as rivers, lakes, wetlands, creeks and systems such as ditches or storm sewers used to convey water.

Unsewered Areas — An area that is not connected to public sanitary sewers. These areas are usually served by private residential or commercial sewage disposal systems.

Where can I get more information?

If you have more questions or need more information, contact Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water at your local district office. To view a map of Ohio EPA's district office boundaries and mailing addresses for each district, go to epa.ohio.gov/portals/47/facts/district_map.pdf.

Central Office — (614) 644-2001

Central District Office — (614) 728-3778

Northeast District Office — (330) 963-1200

Northwest District Office — (419) 352-8461

Southeast District Office — (740) 385-8501

Southwest District Office — (937) 285-6357