

**ERIE COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORIES  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH  
OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**

**SITE INVESTIGATION PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS**

In order for the Erie County Health Department District Office staff to design an appropriate private sewage disposal system for your property they must first complete a site investigation. A site investigation consists of the inspector ensuring that all necessary information was included on the site survey submitted with your application, determining if the site is acceptable for a private sewage disposal system and determining the type of soil and absorptive capacity of your soil. Once the site investigation is completed the inspector will determine the type of private sewage disposal system necessary for your property. In some cases, the inspector will recommend an engineered design; in other cases the inspector will provide an appropriate standard design for your lot.

If your lot is part of a subdivision please inform the inspector prior to the site investigation. It is possible that a private sewage disposal system for your property was previously designed by a professional engineer. If you plan to subdivide your property and offer the lots for sale you must contact the Erie County Health Department, Water and Sewage Engineering division for further information at 961-6800. The Health Department District Office personnel can not design the private sewage disposal systems for lots that are part of a Realty Subdivision.

Preparing your property for a site investigation:

Approximately one week after you submit your application you will need to contact the appropriate District Office to schedule your site investigation. The inspector assigned to your property will give you an approximate location, based on your site survey, for the location of your private sewage disposal system. In the general location described to you by the investigator you must dig two holes approximately twenty (20) feet apart that are one (1) foot square at the bottom and 24 inches deep. These holes are used to determine the absorptive capacity of your soil. In between these two holes you must provide one (1) hand dug or augered hole that is at least five feet deep which is used to determine the types of soil on your property. If you encounter rock or solid clay you may stop digging prior to five feet.

The two 24 inch holes must be presoaked the night before by filling the holes to the top with clean water. Do not put any water into the deeper hole. For the site investigation we will need you to provide two (2) additional five gallon pails of water per hole. Also, please mark each hole with a stake labeled with your name that is easily visible. The stakes should be placed next to each hole. This allows our inspector to easily locate and identify the necessary tests holes.

This service is for your protection and to help maintain a sanitary environment in your community. Do not hesitate to call the Erie County Health Department with any questions that you may have at 961-6800.