



County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency – Environmental Health



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Owner–Buyer Guide to POS Evaluation Reports

This guide is intended to describe the various sections of a Point of Sale (POS) report and help the interested parties to understand what is contained within each one. The POS report is a summary of septic and water records in the Environmental Health (EH) file as well as conditions at the subject site. Keep in mind that the records in the file stay with the subject parcel regardless of ownership change. Detailed EH records can be viewed by clicking on this link and entering the parcel number. [EH Files](#). You may also view the blank inspection form here www.scceh.com.

The POS inspection is performed by a registered Approved Provider (AP). The Environmental Health Division does not verify that the report is accurate, only that it has been submitted. If after reviewing the report you have questions about the content, including definitions, constraints, or implications of the report, you are encouraged to contact the Qualified Provider who conducted the inspection. [Approved Provider List](#).

I. Parcel Information:

This section of the report identifies the parcel, records its size, and indicates the water source. In addition, there is an indication of whether the parcel was vacant at the time of the report.

II. Pumper Report (s):

The POS pumper report has been conducted within six months and tells you the condition of the septic tank and if there are any structural defects or signs of failure. If a POS report demonstrates that the system is failing, a repair under permit is required.

The three previous pumper reports in the file will inform you of several things. First, the frequency with which the tank has been pumped and inspected. EH recommends that tanks are pumped every 3-7 years depending upon the system load. The system load has several variables such as number of occupants, water use, detergents and chemicals used, as well as if the occupants have followed best practices for system function. Second, it informs you if there have been signs of failure or recommended repairs in the past. If there were repairs recommended, you

want to look for evidence that the repairs have been made. Minor tank repairs should be noted on the report and more substantial repairs should have a permit.

III. File Review- Site Info:

The first set of questions inform the buyer about known constraints on the parcel. If the parcel is in a constraint area this can result in OWTS restrictions, which in turn typically means building restrictions.

If the parcel has had a site evaluation, percolation testing, or winter water testing then there is a more robust volume of data that has been collected specific to the parcel. Complaints in the file indicate there was a reported problem on the site in the past. Particular attention should be given to the way in which the problem was resolved.

The file may contain well agreements, easements, or neighbor acknowledgement letters which inform if different agreements that have been made involving the subject parcel. Keep in mind that the records in the file stay with the subject parcel regardless of ownership change. Parcels are allowed a one-time addition of up to five hundred square feet without requiring an upgrade to the OWTS.

IV. File Review- Existing OWTS

If the existing system was not installed under permit, then there was no oversight or approval from Environmental Health. Future building additions will require that the system is demonstrated by a AP to meet current standards to the satisfaction of EH, or a new OWTS will be required to be installed under permit. If the system is not working properly, it will need to be replaced under permit prior to the close of escrow. The type of system will help to inform you of what makes up your particular OWTS. Non-Standard letters alert you to the fact that there are conditions in place for the OWTS. The parcel may also have a pump tank if gravity flow cannot be achieved and a greywater system which diverts approved fixtures into a separate rock filled trench and reduces the waste load on an OWTS.

The last series of questions in this section inform you of if the existing system meets current setbacks and if an upgrade will be required if a building addition is proposed. The next portion of the inspection report outlines the detailed dimensions of the existing OWTS and provides a summary of the permit(s) in the file.

V. File Review- Enhanced Treatment

Enhance treatment OWTS have a special set of conditions and require annual maintenance. The seller is required to disclose any active service agreements, contact information of the current service provider, and the associated annual county and service provider fees. The system should have been inspected by the service provider within the last year.

VI. Site Inspection

This section contains information that was observed when the POS AP was at the parcel site. This is an important component of the POS report and allows the inspector to verify information from the file and determine if site conditions have changed over time. It also provides an opportunity for the inspector to ensure there are not any signs of failure onsite.

If your tank is located in an area that receives vehicle traffic, it is required to have traffic rated risers. Leachfield areas should be protected and kept clear of structures, compaction, and vegetation that has a propensity for root intrusion. This will help to maximize the function of your leachfield and maximize evapotranspiration.

Any surface conditions that show evidence of failure require that the OWTS be repaired under permit.

Distribution devices are an important part of the OWTS. If they are damaged or not level, they can prevent the OWTS from functioning properly.

An important part of the POS inspection is verifying that the expansion area designated on the permit has been preserved. This informs you that there is space available when a new leachfield is needed. If the expansion area does not meet setback and slope standards, then an alternate location may be required when the time comes for a leachfield replacement.

If the OWTS does not meet current setbacks to waterbodies and drainage, EH may require water quality testing of effluent, well water, or adjacent surface water.

Greywater systems should be installed under permit. If there is one on the property that was not permitted, then there was no oversight or approval from Environmental Health. Greywater systems can be an appropriate way to alleviate some of the greywater that enters the OWTS. Visit this link for more information on Greywater systems: [Guide To Greywater](#)

Laundry to Landscape systems are required to have a valve which is intended to divert the greywater seasonally. Laundry to Landscape systems are not permitted by

Environmental Health. If there is one on the property, it should be verified that it was permitted by the SC County Planning Department.

Garbage disposals and water softeners can impact the function of your OWTS. It is important to consider if there is a well on a neighbor parcel which may restrict future development. OWTS must maintain setbacks to neighbor wells and depending upon the site conditions there are some cases where a neighbor well creates a constraint.

VII. Summary Condition

This is the portion of the report where the AP will summarize the condition of the OWTS based upon their findings.