

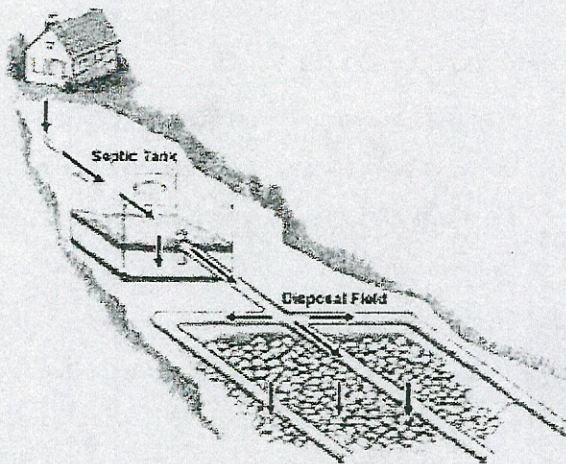
# Education Sheet for the CCT On-Site Septic System (OSS) Application Process

## Is an OSS necessary for your plan?

Well....Will you be constructing, renovating, or adding onto a residence, workshop, or garage? How about constructing or renovating a business? Replacing a failing septic system? Establishing a summer home?

Every residence, place of business, building or other place where persons congregate, reside or are employed, in which plumbing fixtures are installed and to which a public sewer or other wastewater treatment and disposal system is not available and connected, shall be provided with an OSS which shall be constructed, operated, and maintained in accordance with Colville Tribal Code (CTC) 4-5.

## What is an OSS?



Common in rural areas without centralized sewer systems, OSS are underground wastewater treatment structures that use a combination of nature and time-tested technology to treat wastewater from household plumbing produced by bathrooms, kitchen drains, and laundry.

One-quarter of all US homes use OSS to treat their household wastewater.

## How does an OSS work?

First, all water runs out of your house from one main drainage pipe into an underground septic tank (a water-tight container).

Second, the septic tank holds the wastewater long enough to allow solids to settle down to the bottom (forming sludge), while oil and grease floats to the top (forming scum layer).

Then, the liquid wastewater exits the tank (effluent) into the disposal field (aka drainfield or subsurface soil absorption

system [SSAS]).

Finally, the wastewater percolates into the soil, which naturally removes harmful bacteria, viruses and nutri-

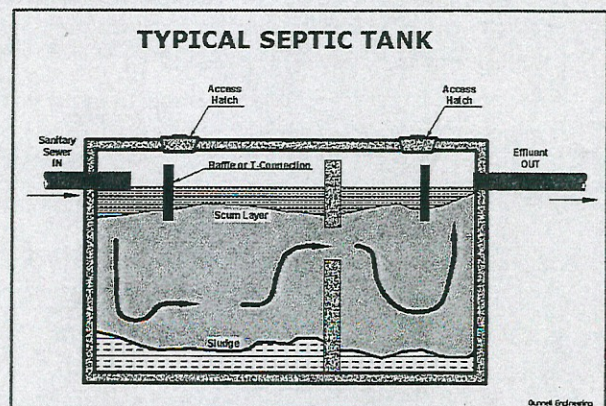
ents. However, if the SSAS isn't functioning properly, sewage can flow into the ground surface or create backups in your toilets, showers, and sinks.

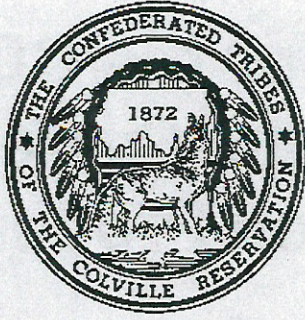


Visit the website:

[www.gbra.org/septic.swf](http://www.gbra.org/septic.swf)

to view an interactive tool addressing how a septic system works.





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**Wastewater in Tribal  
Communities**

*“Native American and Alaskan Native communities are more likely to lack access to wastewater services than other population groups in the United States. In 2012, approximately 12% of these homes lacked access to safe drinking water and/or wastewater facilities [...] A lack of clean water infrastructure in tribal communities threatens public health and the environment, specifically ecosystems that support wildlife and fish upon which these communities commonly rely as subsistence food sources.”*

<http://water.epa.gov/type/watersheds/wastewater/Basic-Information-US-EPA.cfm>

## What is the process for getting an OSS application and permit approved for installation?

The CCT Environmental Trust Department (ETD) is charged with administering CTC Chapter 4-5, the On-site Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Code. The code may be viewed online at:

[http://www.colvilletribes.com/media/files/July\\_2011\\_version\\_of\\_Chapter\\_4-5.pdf](http://www.colvilletribes.com/media/files/July_2011_version_of_Chapter_4-5.pdf)

A 7 - Step Process has been developed to assist applicants and ensure that the human and environmental health needs of their family and home are met.

STEP 1 - Applicant submits a Planning and/or 3P proposal for routing and review by CCT and BIA personnel. Zoning must first be accurate and approved, with cultural, fish, wildlife, water and wetland protection ensured and cleared.

STEP 2 - Applicant provides copies of any CCT and BIA recommendations, mitigation measures or conditions to the CCT ETD Water Regulatory Specialist (WRS). Once these items are received, the WRS will provide the applicant with an Application for Site Evaluation which the applicant will fill out and return to the WRS.

STEP 3 - Upon receiving the completed Application for Site Evaluation and the appropriate fee, the WRS will inform the applicant when Test Trenches may be excavated. The applicant arranges for Test Trenches to be excavated and informs the WRS when they are ready and the WRS will conduct a Site Evaluation.

STEP 4 - The WRS provides a Site Evaluation Report to the applicant, who has backfilled the Test Trenches. The applicant works with a designer or engineer licensed by the Washington State Department of Licensing to design an OSS suitable for the site and submits the OSS Design to the WRS for review.

STEP 5 - The WRS reviews the OSS Design and provides a complete OSS Design Review Sheet to the applicant. Depending on whether or not the OSS Design Review sheet is accurate and all the required information and fees have been received, the WRS will either provide additional recommendations to the applicant or proceed to Step 6.

STEP 6 - WRS issues an OSS Installation Permit to the applicant, and the applicant coordinates with the designer to ensure that the OSS is installed properly. Within two (2) days of the installation (prior to the OSS being covered), the applicant contacts the WRS for an OSS Final Inspection.

STEP 7 - The WRS will verify the OSS was installed in accordance with the permit, the approved system designed for the site, and the requirements of CTC 4-5. Documentation of the approved inspection date and recommendations for OSS maintenance and pumping will be provided to the applicant. If the installation is not according to the permit, the system is not approved or all requirements of CTC 4-5 have not been met, the WRS will provide additional guidance to the applicant.

**For more information, visit us online at:** [http://www.colvilletribes.com/environmental\\_trust.php](http://www.colvilletribes.com/environmental_trust.php)