



Summary: Whatcom County code varies from WAC language and is tailored to our local community. We cannot adopt any language less stringent than what is specified in the WAC. However, there is specific language in WCC 24.05 that can be adjusted or included to protect public health and improve stewardship of groundwater, surface water and soil resources.

Below includes a description of major changes to Onsite Sewage System codes and the entity proposing those changes including the associated code sections.

Summary of Specific Changes of Significance			Benefit	Cost Estimate
Entity	Proposed Change	Section	Impact/Consideration	
DOH & WCHCS	<p>Major & Minor Repairs Definition Changes Some repairs now need a permit such as sealing or patching a septic tank.</p> <p>Included basic definitions and refined previous definitions.</p>	<p>24.05.050 Definitions. 24.05.160 Permit requirements.</p>	<p>Definition changes benefit the homeowner so that code can be applied consistently across projects & departments.</p>	<p>WCHCS is considering approaching the state for a county specific waiver as our current O&M processes may uphold the intention of these changes to an equal standard (specifically the requirement that tank repairs require a permit).</p> <p>If the waiver is not approved then there would be an added cost for folks who have non-water tight septic tanks to also pursue a permit for repair if a patch or seal is required. This increases cost by \$576.45</p>
DOH	<p>Minimum Lot Size Requirements/ Minimum Usable Land More land is needed for a septic system and plans will need to identify the surface area of “unusable land area” such as the radius of a well, surface water, or buildings with foundations.</p>	<p>24.05.360 Developments, subdivisions, and minimum land area requirements.</p>	<p>Minimum lot size provides adequate land available for sewage treatment and required set-backs.</p>	<p>Based on DOH Significant Cost Analysis, designers reported that the cost to incorporate the proposed minimum usable land requirement is \$759-\$1,700 per design.</p>

DOH	Nitrogen Reduction Systems need to treat for nitrogen in some areas and depending on the lot size.	24.05.360 Developments, subdivisions, and minimum land area requirements.	Addressing nitrogen in ground water is important to human health & food systems connected to a healthy shoreline	The device + the design for a system that treats nitrogen on a sub sized lot was estimated at \$3,317 -\$4,890.
WCHCS	Soil log requirements for developments, subdivisions, and minimum land area. A soil log provides designers and inspectors with an understanding of the soil quality. Some designers only provide a small post dug whole which does not provide adequate representation of the drain field area.	24.05.360 Developments, subdivisions, and minimum land area requirements.	This change benefits the homeowner or property developer by ensuring the right type of system is designed in the right soil.	Unknown
WCHCS	Codify a process Requirement of a homeowner exemption packet when homeowners self-install. Currently, there needs to be a process control for when homeowners install their own septic system. Similarly to that of an installer, homeowners need to meet standards to install a system.	24.05.250 Installation.	This change benefits the homeowner by preparing the homeowner for their installation to avoid costly mistakes (the exemption packet is free)	Cost saving of \$10,000 -\$30,000.
WCHCS	Licensing Continuing Education Credit for OSS specialists, installers and pumpers will go from 3 to 1 annually. Requirement of septage reporting deadline	24.05.380 Licensing.	This change benefits the county by reducing the need to develop another software system for tracking CEU credits with a more complex algorithm.	Unknown- Cost savings from development of another software tracking solution & staff time.
DOH	Climate impacts are required to be included in the local management plan.	24.05.070 Local management plans.	The benefit of the proposed amendments in this section is to ensure LMPs remain protective of public health by identifying the specific items that Puget Sound LHOs must address in their LMP and the process for LHOs and the department to follow for review	Unknown - \$19 fee set in 2013 and has been covering the growing costs associated with the LMP & O&M program. No current change proposed.

			and updates to the LMPs. Chapter 70A.110 RCW required all Puget Sound LHOs to develop an LMP by 2007. The intent of this statute is to authorize enhanced LHO OSS programs within Marine Recovery Areas (areas designated as needing enhanced protections) around the Puget Sound so that all OSS are identified, included in a sharable electronic data system, monitored for proper functioning, and repaired when there is a failure.	
WCHCS	Restaurants flow and waste strength sampling requirement. Most restaurants are on complex OSS that have been specifically designed for certain waste strengths and flow. If the system is surpassing this measures, then sewage is not being treated appropriately. These requirements also align with DOH Large Onsite Sewage System standards.	24.05.290 Operation, monitoring, and maintenance – Food service establishments.	This change benefits the property owner by protecting their groundwater source & surface water from wastewater pollution within their own property or the property of another.	This increases a cost to the property owner of a restaurant to test annually for three wastewater treatment measures BOD, COD, and TSS this testing is estimated at \$150-\$250 annually, many already test. There are an estimated 36 systems that do not treat for high waste strength.
WCHCS	Permits and Repair Tank only permits need to be associated with a permitted drain field. Previously, tank only permits could be connected to a non-permitted drain field to fix a failure. Now if there isn't a permit for the drain field, the drain field will also need to be replaced.	24.05.160 Permit requirements.	This change benefits the property owner by protecting their groundwater source or surface water from wastewater pollution within their own property or the property of another as well as food systems connected to shorelines or crops for human consumption.	This change could impact an estimated ~7,000 suspected OSS that are not permitted at the time that the OSS fails. When a system is found to be failing without a permit, it would need to be fully permitted. The permit cost increase is: \$522.90 per permit.
WCHCS & DOH	Site plan design requirements additional required elements on the	24.05.160 Permit requirements.	This change benefits the property owners by providing clear direction	Unknown

	site plan have been included to ensure site plans show all needed features to ensure the OSS can actually be installed as designed.		to those they hire for a building project. This reduces the amount of time and back and forth between the developer and the permitting team.	
WCHCS & DOH	Applications will expire in one year if no further action is taken by the applicant. Permits will expire in 4 years rather than 3 years.	24.05.160 Permit requirements	This change benefits the property owners by increasing the amount of time they have to install a permitted septic system.	Decrease of cost
DOH	There are new failure OSS Options when Site is not suitable. Now if vertical separation cannot be maintained it is recommended to pursue holding tanks and ecology discharge permits.	24.05.310 Repair of failures.	This change benefits the property owner by providing additional options for sewage disposal when a system fails and a new septic system cannot be installed on the property.	Unknown
DOH	Added option that Local Health Officer may develop a remediation policy. Added minimum requirements for remediation. Added prohibition on owners using any remediation process unless it is approved by the LHO.	24.05.300 Remediation	No applicable change to county processes/interactions with property owners at this time.	N/A
DOH	Proprietary products may be retrofitted with components they were not tested with if there is a supply chain or other manufacturing disruption. The manufacturer must provide a statement from an engineer that the retrofit will not impact OSS performance or maintenance.	24.05.090 Sewage Technologies	This change benefits the property owner by increasing the available options to fix a septic system in need of repair.	Cost savings, unknown amount
DOH	Treatment level categories have changed in nomenclature bacteria level.	Throughout	N/A	N/A