

**Environmental Health Division**

1675 W. Garden of the Gods Rd., Suite 2044  
 Colorado Springs, CO 80907  
 (719) 578-3199 *phone*  
 (719) 578-3188 *fax*  
[www.elpasocountyhealth.org](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org)



11/16/2020

DOMINUS INVESTMENTS INC  
 8885 BRANCH PL  
 COLORADO SPRINGS CO 80908-

**RE: "ACCEPTANCE DOCUMENT" FOR ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM - TRANSFER OF TITLE**

8885 BRANCH PL  
**Onsite ID:** ON0034110  
**Tax Schedule # :** 5122001024

Dear Applicant,

The on-site wastewater treatment system for the above property was evaluated for property sale transaction. Pursuant to El Paso County Board of Health Regulation, Chapter 8, a current on-site wastewater treatment system (within 12-months of the date of sale) inspection report must be on file with this department prior to property transfer of title. The inspection is to be conducted only by an El Paso County Public Health Certified Inspector. Inspection reports are available on-line at [www.onlineRME.com](http://www.onlineRME.com). The following facts and findings from the records review and inspection report include:

**GENERAL FACTS AND FINDINGS:**

- |    |                                 |                         |
|----|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. | <i>OWTS permit located:</i>     | <b>Yes</b>              |
| 2. | <i>OWTS sized for:</i>          | # of Bedrooms: <b>3</b> |
| 3. | <i>Type of OWTS:</i>            | <b>GRAVITY</b>          |
| 4. | <i>Treatment level:</i>         | <b>1</b>                |
| 5. | <i>Date of last inspection:</i> | <b>09/29/2020</b>       |

Certified Inspector Comments:

Septic System did NOT need pumping at time of inspection on 09/29/2020

There is No map of the system but probed most likely spots for leach field no problems found.

Did not pump so did not fully inspect tank.

- There are no deficiencies noted at time of certified inspection dated 9.29.2020

- Additional comments

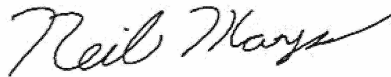
\* The septic system was approved in 1985 for a 3 bedroom house; however the application for the Acceptance Document indicated the house has 4 bedrooms. We recommend, but do not require, the septic system be upgraded to meet the requirements of a 4 bedroom house in an effort to protect the soil treatment area from premature failure associated with the potential increased wastewater flow to the system. The number of bedrooms is used to determine the potential wastewater volume from the house at full occupancy.

\* It is recommended that all gravity fed systems are evaluated by a licensed OWTS professional a minimum of every 4 years.

\* For tanks containing effluent filters, it is important that those filters are removed and cleaned a minimum of once every 6 months, to ensure build up does not block movement of and cause back up of effluent

\* The OWTS tanks was not pumped at time of inspection therefore the water tightness and interior tank integrity could not be fully evaluated.

This report indicates certain characteristics of the on-site wastewater treatment system at the time of the inspection and records review. This report is not a guarantee or warranty future performance of the on-site wastewater treatment system. This Acceptance Document is valid for one year from the date above. For questions or comments regarding this report, please contact this department.



Environmental Health Specialist

# Arrowhead Septic

2275 Twilight Canyon Trail  
Colorado Springs, CO 80926

719-576-7707

Mail To: JAMES MCCOY

## PROPERTY INFORMATION

Location: 8885 BRANCH PL  
COLORADO SPRINGS  
Tax ID: 5122001024

Use:

ON ID: ON0034110

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Here

## ON-SITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM INSPECTION REPORT

Inspected: 09/29/2020 - Inspection Type: PROPERTY SALE - Correction Status: No corrections needed

Company: Certification - Level 2  
Arrowhead Septic

Work Performed By:  
Henry Geneman (12678ITC)

Submitted 09/30/2020 by:  
Elizabeth McCowen

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### COMMENTS & GENERAL INSPECTION NOTES

#### No Deficiencies Noted

Septic System did NOT need pumping at time of inspection on 09/29/2020  
There is No map of the system but probed most likely spots for leach field no problems found.  
Did not pump so did not fully inspect tank.

### GENERAL SITE & SYSTEM CONDITIONS

The General Site and System Conditions were:	Fully Inspected
All Components accessible for maintenance, secure and in good condition:	YES
Surfacing effluent from any component (including mound seepage):	NO
Components appear to be watertight - no visual leaks:	YES
Improper encroachment (roads, buildings, etc.) onto component(s):	NO
Component settling problems observed:	NO
Abnormal ponding present for one or more of the disposal components:	NO
Subsurface components adequately covered	YES
Site maintenance required (e.g. Landscape maintenance) If yes, describe in comments:	NO
Dwelling is currently vacant (If YES describe vacancy in comments):	NO
Flow test conducted:	YES
Flow test total gallons:	200

### ONSITE SEWAGE SYSTEM INSPECTION DETAIL

TANK: Septic Tank - 2 Compartment		
This component was:	Fully Inspected	
Component appears to be functioning as intended:	YES	
Effluent level within operational limits (if NO explain in comments):	YES	
Effluent Filter Cleaned (N/A = Not Present):	N/A	
Effluent filter in good condition (N/A = Not Present):	N/A	
Compartment 1 Scum accumulation (Inches, if other specify):	0	
Compartment 1 Sludge accumulation (Inches, if other specify):	1	
Compartment 2 Scum accumulation (Inches, if other specify):	0	
Compartment 2 Sludge accumulation (Inches, if other specify):	0	
Pumping needed:	NO	
Approximate Gallons to be pumped (if needed) by Certified Pumper:	1250	
All required baffles in good condition (N/A = No baffles required):	YES	
All required Tees in good condition (N/A = No Tees required):	N/A	
Distribution: Manifold		
This component was:	Fully Inspected	
Component appears to be functioning as intended:	YES	

**Soil Treatment Area: Gravity**

This component was:	Fully Inspected	
Component appears to be functioning as intended:	YES	
Ponding present? If YES explain in comments:	NO	

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EL PASO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT  
COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

PERMIT NUMBER 3329

SEWAGE DISPOSAL INSPECTION FORM

DATE 10-3-85

APPROVAL: YES  NO

TAX # 572201024

ENVIRONMENTALIST Julie Johnson

LOCATION (street number) 8885 Branch Place ~~OCCUPANT~~ Owner/Builder: Jim McCoy

LEGAL DESCRIPTION LOT 7 Rampart View Subdivision

TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION frame NO. OF BEDROOMS 3

SYSTEM INSTALLED BY Hank Kuiper

COMMERCIAL MFG. yes SIZE 1250

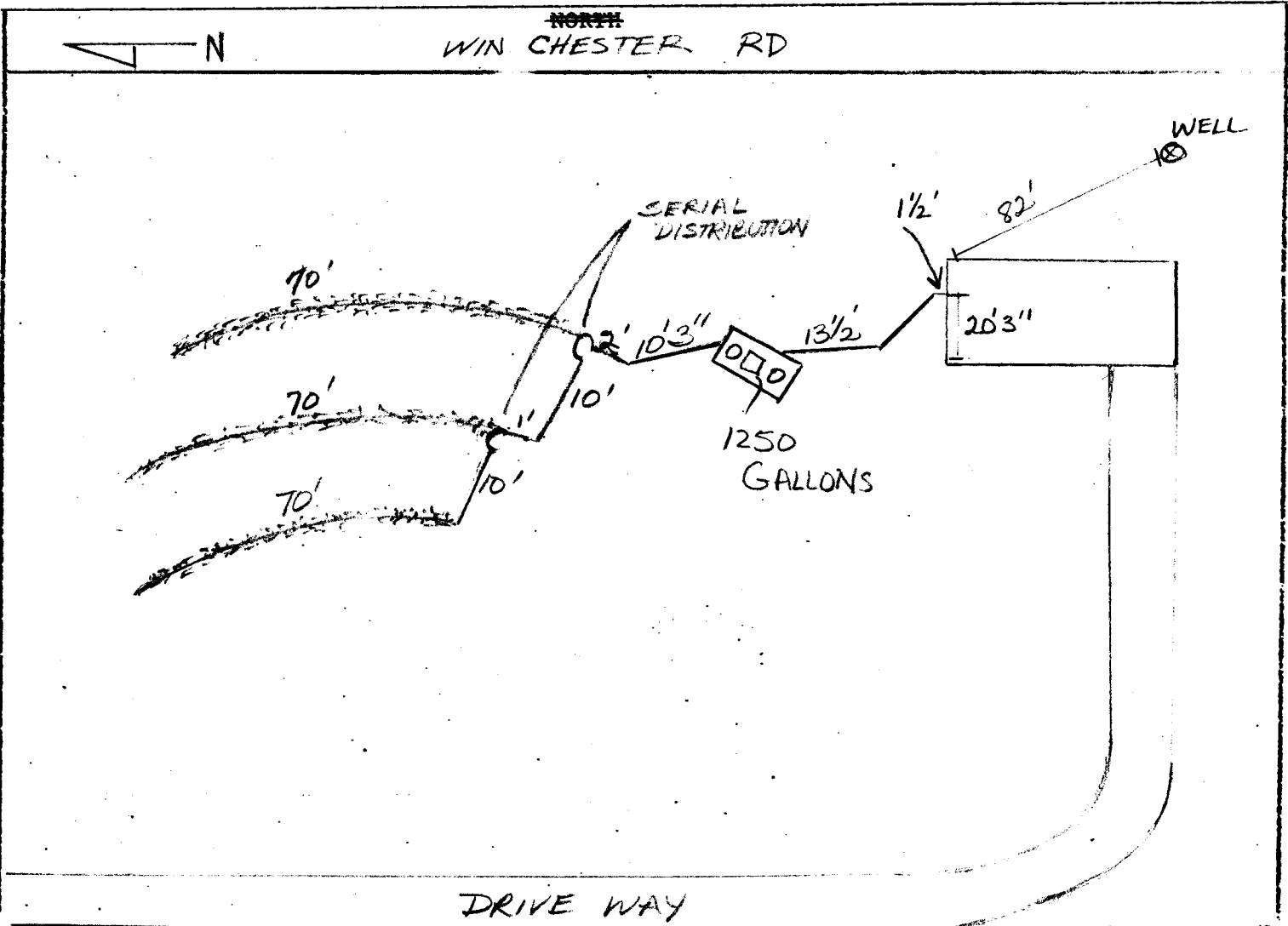
TYPE OF MATERIAL pre cast concrete NO. COMPARTMENTS 2

WIDTH \_\_\_\_\_ LENGTH \_\_\_\_\_ DEPTH (total) \_\_\_\_\_ LIQ. CAP. \_\_\_\_\_

DISPOSAL FIELD: BED OR TRENCH DEPTH 20"-2 1/2' WIDTH 3' LENGTH 210' SQ. FT. 630"

DISTANCE BETWEEN LINES 10' ROCK Rock DEPTH 12" UNDER 6" OVER 2"

LEACHING PITS (NO.) \_\_\_\_\_ LINING MATERIAL \_\_\_\_\_ CAPACITY SQ. FT. \_\_\_\_\_



*Mary*

**APPLICATION FOR A PERMIT TO CONSTRUCT, REMODEL, OR INSTALL A SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM**

NAME OF OWNER JAMES R. Mc Coy HOME PHONE 495-4262 WORK PHONE SAME  
ADDRESS OF PROPERTY 8885 BRANCH PL. DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY LOT 7 Rampart View Subdivision  
TAX SCHEDULE NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ SYSTEM CONTRACTOR WEEKS PHONE 1-749-2300  
OWNER'S ADDRESS IF DIFFERENT 1585 ARCHER TERRACE Elbert CO 80106  
TYPE OF HOUSE CONSTRUCTION FRAME SOURCE AND TYPE OF WATER SUPPLY WELL  
SIZE OF LOT 5 AC MAXIMUM POTENTIAL NUMBER OF BEDROOMS 3 BASEMENT (yes or no) yes  
PERCOLATION TEST RESULTS ATTACHED (yes or no)

A plot plan and accompanying information are essential; it may be drawn on the back of this application or be attached. Please include by measured distance the location of wells including neighbors' wells, springs, water supply lines, cisterns, buildings, proposed structures, property lines, property dimensions, subsoil drains, lakes, ponds, water courses, streams, and dry gulches. Please show the location of the proposed septic system by directions and distances from actual and/or proposed dwellings, structures, or fixed reference objects. Give complete directions to the property from major highways.

Applicant acknowledges that the completeness of the application is conditional upon such further mandatory and additional tests and reports as may be required by the department to be made and furnished by the applicant for purposes of evaluation of the application; and issuance of the permit is subject to such terms and conditions as deemed necessary to ensure compliance with rules and regulations adopted under Article 10, Title 25, C.R.S. 1973 as amended. The undersigned hereby certifies that all statements made, information and reports submitted by the applicant are or will be represented to be true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and are designed to be relied on by the El Paso County Health Dept. in evaluating the same for purposes of issuing the permit applied for herein. I further understand that any falsification or misrepresentation may result in the denial of the application or revocation of any permit granted based upon said application and in legal action for perjury as provided by law.

SIGNATURE *James R. Mc Coy*

HEALTH DEPARTMENT USE ONLY

PERMIT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ RECEIPT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ DATE TO LAND USE DEPARTMENT 5/16/85  
ABSORPTION AREA 621 TANK CAPACITY 1250 DATE OF SITE INSPECTION 5/20/85

REMARKS: need more info on plot plan  
keep leach in area of perc. do not install in  
low drainage areas) of lot. approved if perc. test is  
satisfactory. If groundwater is encountered during  
15DS installation an engineered system may be required

APPLICATION IS APPROVED (X) DENIED ( ) DATE 5/29/85 ENVIRONMENTALIST *L. Meyer*  
207' x 36" trench

ON

TAX # 5122 001024

E3229

Acres 5

EL PASO COUNTY • COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Permit No. \_\_\_\_\_

Water Supply well

501 North Foote Avenue • Colorado Springs, Colorado • 578-3125

Receipt No. 5853

**8885 BRANCH PLACE PERMIT**

TO CONSTRUCT, ALTER, REPAIR or MODIFY ANY INDIVIDUAL SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM

10/03/1985

Issued To James R. McCoy

Date May 29, 1985

Address of Property 8885 Branch Place, Rampart View Subd.

Phone 495-4262

(Permit valid at this address only)

*Black Fresh*

Sewage-Disposal System work to be performed by Weeks

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

This Permit is issued in accordance with 25-10-106 Colorado Revised Statutes 1973, as amended. PERMIT EXPIRES upon completion-installation of sewage-disposal system or at the end of six (6) months from date of issue—whichever occurs first—(unless work is in progress). This permit is revokable if all stated requirements are not met.

**—THIS PERMIT DOES NOT DENOTE APPROVAL OF ZONING AND ACREAGE REQUIREMENTS—**

\$150.00

PERMIT FEE (NOT REFUNDABLE)

November 29, 1985

DATE OF EXPIRATION

*Allen O. Walker, M.D.*

DIRECTOR, COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

*[Signature]*

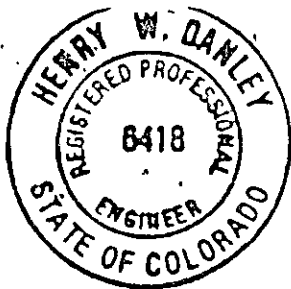
ENVIRONMENTALIST

**NOTE: LEAVE ENTIRE SEWAGE-DISPOSAL SYSTEM UNCOVERED FOR FINAL INSPECTION. 48 HOUR ADVANCE NOTICE REQUIRED.**

SEPTIC TANK: 1250 gallons	TRENCH SYSTEM: total square feet <u>621</u> <u>207</u> ft. of trench <u>36</u> inches wide _____ ft. of trench _____ inches wide	BED SYSTEM: total square feet _____	SEEPAGE PIT SYSTEM: total square feet _____ rings or _____ diam. x _____ w/d
------------------------------	---	--	--

Keep leach in area of perc. Do not install in low drainage area(s) of lot. NOTES: If groundwater is encountered during ISDS installation an engineered system may be required.

The Health Office shall assume no responsibility in case of failure or inadequacy of a sewage-disposal system, beyond consulting in good faith with the property owner or representative. Free access to the property shall be authorized at reasonable times for the purpose of making such inspections as are necessary to determine compliance with requirements of this law.



DARLOW ENGINEERING CO.  
 1119 Panorama Dr.  
 COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO 80904  
 633-9440

PERCULATION TEST REPORT

3 TEST HOLES: 4" DIA. X 30" IN DEPTH

WATER LEVEL \_\_\_\_\_

8 FT. DEEP SOIL SAMPLE HOLE  
 RANGE OF EACH LAYER TO 8 FT.

FT.

0'-1'	Soil
1'-4'	SAND
4'-8'	SAND & GRAVEL
Thin Clay layers at intervals down to 8 ft.	

TIME	Hole #1		Hole #2		Hole #3	
	IN	DROP	IN	DROP	IN	DROP
<del>1:00</del> 5/16/85 PM						
2:00	24"		24"		24"	
10		2		6"		4"
20		1.5		5		3
30		1		4.5		3.5
40		1.0		4		2
50		.85		4		2
3:00		1/4		4		2
	Min/in 40		Min/in 4		Min/in 5	

CUSTOMER & LOCATION	
Tim McCoy	
lot	
8885 Branch Pl	

Presoak	From	To
Date 5/16/85	1:00	

*Henry W. Danley*  
 HENRY W DANLEY P.E.

AVERAGE : Min/in = 17

THIS FORM MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY A PLOT PLAN SHOWING THE LENGTHS OF THE PROPERTY LINES, THE POSITION OF THE BUILDING RELATIVE TO THE PROPERTY LINES, THE GENERAL LOCATION OF THE WELL AND THE SEPTIC TANK AND THE DISTANCE FROM THE LEECH FIELD TO THE WELL (MIN. 100 FEET)



REVIEWED BY: JW

DATE: 23 May 85

EL PASO COUNTY  
LAND USE DEPARTMENT  
SEPTIC SITE REVIEW

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ TAX SCHEDULE # \_\_\_\_\_

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Lot 7, RumpART View Sub

SUBDIVISION PLAT: BOOK \_\_\_\_\_ PAGE \_\_\_\_\_ ZONE A-4

LOT AREA 5.1c PLAT RECORDING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

CHECKLIST

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>REMARKS</u>
LOT AREA:	<u>/</u>		
FLOODPLAIN:	<u>/</u>		
GEOLOGIC HAZARD:	<u>/</u>		
OTHER ZONE REQUIREMENTS:	<u>/</u>		

GENERAL REMARKS: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Intended solely as checklist to convey builder/landowner of potential  
to independent problems.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide a copy of the plat to the  
landowner and to the local health department for their review and approval.  
The local health department may require additional information.

This document is not a contract and should not be used as such. It is intended  
for informational purposes only and should not be used as a basis for any legal  
action.

gk.  
WORK PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE 12-11-85 REQUESTED BY Jim McCoy HOME PHONE 495-2614

ADDRESS OF PROPERTY 8885 BRANCH PL OWNER'S NAME MARTIN

LEGAL DESCRIPTION LOT 7 RAMPART VIEW SUB

INSPECTION FOR: V.A. \_\_\_\_\_ FHA \_\_\_\_\_ CONVENTIONAL

REPORT TO BE: PICKED UP  MAILED \_\_\_\_\_

REPORT SENT TO \_\_\_\_\_

Water Supply: Public yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Private Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_  
Well 100 Feet from Sewage System Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_  
Well casing terminates in pit Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No   
Well casing 12 inches above ground surface Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_  
Water sample taken Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_ Date of sample 12/11/85  
Results Safe  Unsafe \_\_\_\_\_ as of date of sampling.

Sewage Disposal System  
Approved permitted system Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_  
System installed prior to permit requirements Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Type of System (if known) circle one  
a.) Cesspool (Note: construction, alternation or repair of a Cesspool is prohibited by Statute.)  
b.  Septic tank/leach lines  
c.) Septic tank/absorption bed  
d.) Septic tank/absorption pit (dry well)  
e.) Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_  
f.) Unknown

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  Sewage noted on the ground surface, at the time of inspection.  
Copy of permit/inspection report enclosed Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If a second visit is necessary an additional charge of \$12.50 will be assessed.  
Both fees are payable BEFORE inspection will be made.

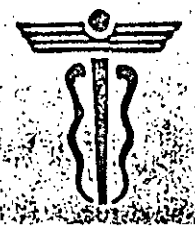
Paid: Yes  No \_\_\_\_\_ Date 12/11/85 Receipt Number 0024

Second visit required Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ PAID: Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Receipt Number \_\_\_\_\_

Date 12/11/85 Time 1:45 Environmentalist [Signature]

12/13/85. Letter picked up - aq

510



# EL PASO COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

501 NORTH FOOTE AVENUE • COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80909-4598

AIR QUALITY CONTROL: 501 NORTH FOOTE, 80909-4598 • 578-3137  
DRUG TREATMENT PROGRAM: 710 SOUTH TEJON, 80903 • 578-3150  
VITAL STATISTICS: 27 EAST VERMILIO, 80903 • 520-7475

REPLY TO:

NAME MARK A MARTIN DAY TIME PHONE 495-0679 DATE 2-23-87  
ADDRESS OF PROPERTY 8885 BRANCH PK BLACK FOREST CO 80904  
LEGAL DESCRIPTION LOT 4 RAMPART VIEW

Please supply the following on the back of this form;

1. Directions to the property.
2. Location of the well.

REPORT TO BE: Picked up  Mailed

MAILED TO: \_\_\_\_\_

Fees are payable before inspection will be made. If a second visit is necessary an additional charge of \$12.50 will be assessed.

Receipt Number 5145 Date 2/23/87  
Receipt Number 5168 Date 3/6/87 (2nd visit)

DO NOT WRITE BELOW THIS LINE

### WATER SUPPLY

Public  Private   
 Yes  No Well 100 feet from sewage system.  
 Yes  No Well casing terminates in pit.  
 Yes  No Well casing 12 inches above ground surface.  
 Yes  No Water sample taken: Date of sample 3/3/87

Water Results: 0 Coliform Heavy (growth) Other Bacteria

COMMENTS: Shov very deep - Difficult to tell how well type  
3/6/87 - (Heavy growth other bacteria) Recommend chlorinating the well and resampling.

### SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM

Yes  No Approved permitted system. 3/10/87 de  
 Yes  No System installed prior to permit requirements (3-1-66)  
 Yes  No\* Sewage noted on the ground surface, at the time of inspection  
\* This does not guarantee a properly functioning system.

### Type of system

Cesspool (construction, alteration or repair of cesspool is prohibited by Statute.)  
 Septic tank/leach lines.  
 Septic tank/absorption bed.  
 Septic tank/absorption pit (dry well)  
 Other (describe) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unknown

COMMENTS: Shov very deep (12" +) Bot, No Sewage Noted at this time

DATE: 3/3/87 TIME: 2:04 PM Environmentalist [Signature]



# Transfer of Title "Acceptance Document" Application

**Application Summary:**

Submitted: 11/2/2020 4:43:55 PM  
Completed: 11/16/2020 10:33:00 AM

Application No: 83470  
Reviewer: Mayes, Neil

## Addresses

**Applicant's Address**

John Bowen  
8885 branch place  
Colorado Springs , CO 80908

**Contact Methods**

Email: johnbims@gmail.com  
Phone: 3102799768

**Property Information**

John Bowen  
8885 branch place  
Colorado Springs , CO 80908  
Property Tax Schedule #: 5122001024

**Current Property Owner**

John Bowen  
8885 branch place  
Colorado Springs , CO 80908

**Contact Methods**

Email:  
Phone:

**Seller's Agent**
**Contact Methods**

Email:

**Buyer's Agent**
**Contact Methods**

Email:

**Title Company Contact**
**Contact Methods**

Email:

**Property Address**  
8885 BRANCH PL  
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO

**Total charges for application: \$65.00**

## Questions

### General

**Q:** Is the home/building currently occupied?

**A:** Yes

**Q:** How many bedrooms does the home contain? Please Note: If this is not a single family residence, please define a purpose for the building.

**A:** 4

**Q:** What year was the home/building built?

**A:** 1985

**Q:** Is the current property owner the original property owner?

**A:** No

**Q:** Please indicate who the original property owner was. (Please enter "Unknown" if you do not know who the original property owner was.)

**A:** Unknown

**Q:** Is the current property address the original property address?

**A:** Yes

**Q:** Has the Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) been inspected by an El Paso County Public Health Certified Inspector within the past twelve (12) months?

**A:** No

**Q:** I understand that if this acceptance document is submitted with incomplete information, including the lack of a current OWTS inspection completed within the past twelve (12) months, it does not meet the requirements set forth within Regulations of the El Paso County Board of Health, Chapter 8, section

**A:** I acknowledge

**Q:** Is there a second unit with a separate OWTS on the property to be transferred? Please Note: Full application fees will be required for additional units on separate septic systems.

**A:** No

## Service Summary

Service	Fee
Acceptance Document Fee	\$55.00
Processing Fee. NOTE: this charge is from OnlineRME, LLC.	\$10.00

**Transfer of Title "Acceptance Document" Application**

Application ID: 83470

Applications powered by the SkipThePaper

# Payment Log

Date	Amount	Description	Bank Response
11/2/2020	\$10.00	Processing Fee	This transaction has been approved.
11/2/2020	\$55.00	Application Fee	This transaction has been approved.

**Total amount Paid: \$65.00**

# Maintaining Your Septic System

## A Guide for Homeowners

El Paso County Public Health

Buried beneath your back yard, it is out there — constantly working. When you're at work, it is working. When you're eating dinner, it continues working. And when you're sleeping, it's still out there in the dark — working. What is it? Your septic system. It may be the most overlooked and undervalued utility in your home; but with proper care and maintenance, your septic system can continue to work for you for decades.

Caring for your home septic system is your responsibility. This publication is designed to show you how your septic system works, why and how to maintain it, and how to avoid some common problems with septic systems. You should know that proper use and care of your septic system not only protects you and your family; it protects our community and our environment.

## What's in it for you? Plenty!

Caring for your septic system properly is very important. Here are just a few reasons:

**Protect our community environment:** A failing septic system can release pollutants that damage our environment. Pollutants such as nitrates and phosphates, for example, can cause excessive algae growth in lakes and streams, impairing aquatic life. Chemicals improperly disposed of through a septic system also can pollute local water sources and can contribute to early system failures.

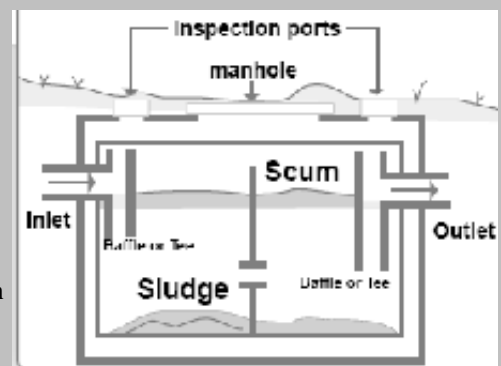
**Protect your health:** When a septic system fails, inadequately treated wastewater can reach the groundwater. Bacteria and viruses from human waste can cause diarrhea, hepatitis, and typhoid fever. Many serious outbreaks of these diseases have been caused by contaminated drinking water.

**Protect your money:** Failing septic systems are expensive to repair or replace, and improper maintenance by homeowners is a common cause of early system failure. The minimal amount of preventive maintenance that septic systems require costs very little in comparison to the cost of a new system. For example, it typically costs \$3,000 to \$10,000 to replace a failing septic system, compared to \$100 to \$300 average per year to maintain one. Failing septic systems also can hurt your property values and those of others in our community.

### How your septic system works

There are two main parts to the basic septic system: the **septic tank** and **leachfield**. Household wastewater first flows into the septic tank, where it should stay for at least a day to allow heavy solids to settle to the bottom as sludge and grease and light solids float to the top as scum. Sludge and scum remain in the tank so that naturally occurring bacteria can break them down. But sometimes the bacteria can't finish the job and septic tanks need to be pumped out periodically.

When a septic system works properly, new wastewater from the house pushes the separated wastewater in the septic tank out into the leachfield, which provides additional treatment by



allowing the wastewater to trickle through a filtering system composed of perforated pipes or chambers, gravel and soil. Bacteria in the soil also helps to break down the waste.

One problem can occur if the household uses so much water in a short time that wastewater is pushed out into the leachfield before solids have had a chance to settle out. Solids damage the leachfield pipes or chambers and can strain the system unnecessarily. So homeowners should stagger their laundry throughout the week and try to do no more than two wash loads per day.



El Paso County Public Health  
1675 W. Garden of the Gods Rd., Suite 2044  
Colorado Springs, CO 80907-9444  
(719) 578-3199 FAX (719) 578-3188  
[www.elpasocountyhealth.org](http://www.elpasocountyhealth.org)

# Inspections and maintenance key to healthy system

Septic system maintenance is a lot like automobile maintenance — a little effort on a regular basis can save a lot of money and significantly prolong the life of the system.

Get your septic system inspected annually to ensure that it is working properly and to determine when the septic tank should be pumped. At this time, all compartments should be pumped. Systems that have moving parts may require more frequent inspections.

It's a good idea to be present when your system is inspected and/or pumped, but be aware that the toxic gases that exist in septic tanks can kill you in minutes. Even looking into the tank can be dangerous. Leave inspections and pumping to trained professionals.

A professional contractor should do a thorough inspection to include:

**Locating the system:** Even a professional may have trouble locating the system if the access to your tank is buried. One way to find your system is to go to the basement and determine which direction the sewer pipe is heading as it goes out through the basement wall. Back outside, the inspector will use an insulated probe inserted into the soil to locate the buried piping. Once the system components are found, be sure to sketch a map and keep it on hand to save time on future service visits.

(The El Paso County Department of Health and Environment may have a drawing of the components from 1966 to date for your convenience.)

**Uncovering the manhole and inspection ports:** This may require some digging in the yard. If they are buried, it will help in future inspections if elevated access covers or risers are installed.

**Checking connections:** Flushing the toilets, running water in the sinks and running the washing machine through a cycle will help to determine if the household plumbing is all going to the system and working correctly.

**Measuring the scum and sludge layers:** The professional contractor will measure the scum and sludge layers. If the sludge depth is equal to one third or more of the liquid depth, the tank should be pumped. Be aware it is most prudent to conduct regular inspections and pump as recommended.

**Checking the tank and the leachfield:** The inspector will check the condition of the baffles or tees and the walls of the tank for cracks, and the drainfield for any signs of failure. If the system includes a distribution box, drop box, or pump, these need to be checked, too.



## What you should do

### Keep good records

It is very important to keep a detailed record of all inspections, pumpings, permits, repairs, and any other maintenance to your system along with a sketch of where your septic system is located. Having this information on hand for service visits can save you both time and money.

### Protect the tank and leachfield

Protect your septic system from potential damage. Don't plant anything near your septic system other than grass that doesn't require irrigation. Don't allow anyone to drive or operate heavy machinery over any part of the system. Also, don't build anything over the leachfield or allow livestock to compact the soil over a leachfield.

### Limit Additives/System Cleaners

While many products on the market claim to help septic systems work better, there is no magic potion to cure an ailing system. In fact, most engineers and sanitation professionals believe that commercial septic system additives are, at best, useless, and at worst, harmful.

There are two types of septic system additives: biological (like bacteria, enzymes, and yeast) and chemical. The biological additives are harmless, but some chemical additives can potentially harm the soil in the leachfield and contaminate the groundwater.



What you put into your septic system greatly affects its ability to do its job. Remember, your septic system contains living organisms that digest and treat waste. As a rule of thumb, do not dispose of anything in your septic system that can just as easily be put in the trash. The more solids that go into the tank, the more frequently the tank will need to be pumped and the higher the risk for problems.

In the kitchen, avoid washing food scraps, coffee grounds, grease and cooking oil down the drain. Use the same common-sense approach in the bathroom. Don't use the toilet to dispose of plastics, paper towels, facial tissues, tampons, sanitary napkins, cigarette butts, dental floss, disposable diapers, condoms, kitty litter, etc. Only body waste and toilet paper should be flushed down the toilet.

When used as recommended by the manufacturer, most household cleaning products will not adversely affect the operation of your septic tank. Drain cleaners are an exception, however, and only a small amount of these products can kill the bacteria and temporarily disrupt the operation of the tank.

Household cleaners such as bleach, disinfectants and toilet bowl cleaners should be used in moderation

only in accordance with product labels. Overuse of these products can harm your system.

Do not use your septic system to dispose of hazardous household chemicals. Even small amounts of paints, varnishes, paint thinners, waste oil, anti-freeze, photographic solutions, pharmaceuticals, antibacterial soaps, gasoline, oil, pesticides, and other organic chemicals can

destroy helpful bacteria and the biological processes taking place within your system. These chemicals also pollute the groundwater.

Be sure to dispose of leftover hazardous chemicals at an approved hazardous waste collection center. For

more information, contact the Household Chemical Waste Collection Facility at (719) 520-7878.



## How appliances may affect your septic system

### Hot Tubs/Whirlpools

Hot tubs and whirlpools have become more common in the home as a source of therapy. The soothing, swirling waters of a spa may be good for a homeowner, but the large amounts of water that drain from the hot tub are not good for your septic system.

Emptying large quantities of water from a hot tub into your septic system can overload a system and stir the solids in the tank, pushing them into the leachfield, eventually causing it to fail.

Hot tub water should instead be cooled and then drained onto turf or landscaped areas of your property, well away from the septic tank, leachfield and house.



### Garbage Disposals

It's best not to use a garbage disposal if you have a septic system. Some of the small food scraps that come out of a disposal can be broken down by bacteria, but most just add to the solids in a tank and require pumping more often. In fact, Colorado requires a larger size leachfield if a garbage grinder/disposal unit is in operation in the house.

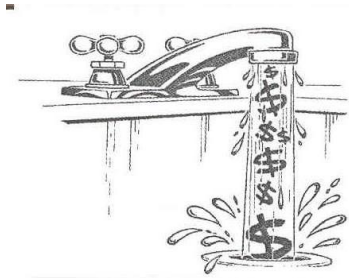
### Water Softeners

Some freshwater purification systems, including water softeners, pump hundreds of gallons of water into the septic system all at once. This can agitate the solids and allow excess to flow into the leachfield. Consult a plumbing professional about alternative routing for such freshwater treatment systems.

Water softeners also can flush several pounds of salt into a septic system, which may affect the digestion in the septic tank or reduce the permeability in the soil dispersal system.

# Use water wisely all around the house

Water conservation is very important for septic systems because continual saturation of the soil in the leachfield can affect the quality of the soil and its ability to naturally remove toxics, bacteria, viruses, and other pollutants from the wastewater.



The most effective way to conserve water around the house is to first reduce or eliminate waste of water. Immediately repair any leaking faucets or running toilets, and use dishwashers only when full.

## Laundry

Selecting the proper load size can save you water, energy and money. Also, try not to do more than two laundry loads per day; washing more loads in succession can overload your septic system with water, causing it to pass solids into the leachfield.

Newer energy-efficient clothes washers use 35% less energy and 50% less water than a standard model. Look for appliances that display the Energy Star symbol. This indicates they meet strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the EPA and U.S. Department of Energy.



Use only non-phosphate or low phosphate laundry detergents. Powder detergents with low inert (clay) content also are easier on the septic system.

## Bathrooms

Inside a typical household, most of the water used — and potentially saved — is in the bathroom. For example, don't let the water run while washing hands and brushing teeth. Avoid taking long showers and/or install water-saving features in faucets and shower heads. These devices can reduce water use by up to 50%. Low-flush toilets use 1.6 gallons per flush compared to the 3 to 5 gallons used by conventional toilets. Even using a toilet dam or putting a container filled with rocks in the toilet can reduce water use by 25%.

Try to space out activities requiring heavy water use over several days. Also, divert roof drains, surface water, and sump pumps away from the leachfield.

## Checklist For Your Septic System

- Do** learn the location of your septic tank and leachfield. Keep a sketch of it handy with your maintenance record for service visits.
- Do** have your septic system inspected annually.
- Do** have your septic tank pumped out by a licensed contractor, approximately every 3 to 5 years, or as often as is appropriate for your system.
- Do** keep your septic tank cover accessible for inspections and pumping. Install risers if necessary.
- Do** call a professional when you experience problems with your system or if there are any signs of failure.
- Do** keep a detailed record of repairs, pumping, inspections, permits issued, and other maintenance activities.
- Do** conserve water to avoid overloading the system. Be sure to repair any leaky faucets or toilets.
- Do** divert other sources of water, like roof drains, house footing drains, and sump pumps, away from the septic system. Excessive water keeps the soil in the leachfield from naturally cleansing the wastewater.
  
- Don't** go down into a septic tank. Toxic gases are produced by the natural treatment processes in septic tanks and can kill in minutes. Take extreme care when inspecting a septic tank, even when just looking in.
- Don't** allow anyone to drive or park over any part of the system.
- Don't** plant anything over or near the leachfield except grass that doesn't require irrigation. Roots from nearby trees or shrubs may clog and damage the drain lines.
- Don't** dig in your leachfield or build anything over it, and don't cover the leachfield with a hard surface such as concrete or asphalt. The area over the leachfield should have only a grass cover.
- Don't** make or allow repairs to your septic system without obtaining the required Health Department permit. Use professional licensed onsite contractors when needed.
- Don't** use septic tank additives. Under normal operating conditions, these products usually do not help and some may even be harmful to your system.
- Don't** use your toilet as a trash can or poison your septic system and the groundwater by pouring harmful chemicals and cleansers down the drain. Harsh chemicals can kill the beneficial bacteria that treat your wastewater.
- Don't** use a garbage disposal without checking with your local regulatory agency to make sure that your septic system can accommodate this additional waste.
- Don't** allow backwash from home water softeners to enter the septic system, unless strict building codes require connection to the system.
- Don't** allow livestock over the leachfield.

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