

General Information for the July 1, 2010 Fee Changes

1. Because of a tightening state budget and increased costs, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) was prompted to examine its costs for processing applications to construct onsite sewage systems and water supplies during the 2010 General Assembly session.
2. VDH calculated its costs of service delivery and suggested new fees to better reflect its cost of service. Following a public vetting process, the executive and legislative branches of government approved VDH's proposed fees in the 2010 budget bill.
3. Numerous services remain free:
 - plan reviews for local governments
 - courtesy reviews of private sector work
 - engineering plan reviews and proprietary product reviews
 - inspections of wells and sewage systems
 - site and soil evaluations
 - sanitary surveys
 - designs of certain onsite sewage systems
 - complaint investigations
 - reviews of private sector work
4. For owners whose adjusted gross income is below the federal poverty guidelines, all services remain free.¹
5. Recognizing the value of private sector evaluations, the VDH charges reduced application fees when applications include supporting work from Onsite Soil Evaluators and Professional Engineers.
6. The VDH user fees are less than the actual cost to provide the services.
7. The user fees are comparable or less than fees for similar services in the private sector and are typically less than what is charged in North Carolina and Maryland to process these kinds of applications.
8. Understanding that people expect quality service, the VDH always welcomes customer input about their experience working with staff. Please contact the Environmental Health Manager at (804) 748-1610.

¹ Each year, the federal government releases an official income level for poverty called the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines, and is often informally referred to as the "Federal Poverty Level." The benefit levels of many low-income assistance programs are based on these poverty guidelines. Visit <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/> for additional information. See the Department of Health *Regulations Governing Eligibility Standards and Charges for Medical Care Services to Individuals* for more information.