Frequently Asked Environmental Health Questions
Onsite Food Services & Onsite Septic and Wells Services

Food Program:

Q: How can I receive a Food Establishment Permit?
A: To apply for a Food Establishment Permit, fill out the Virginia Department of Health Food Establishment Permit Application which is located under Application, Forms & Regulations on the Environmental Health Services webpage within the Chickahominy Health District website.

Q: How do I file a complaint about a restaurant in Charles City, Goochland County, Hanover County or New Kent County?
A: Fill out the Complaint Information Form located under Application, Forms & Regulations on the Environmental Health Services webpage within the Chickahominy Health District website. Once completed, turn this form in to your local health department.

Q: Where can I find Virginia Restaurant Inspectors online?
A: You can find a Virginia restaurant Inspector on the following website.
http://www.healthspace.com/Clients/VDH/VDH_Website.nsf

Foodborne Illness

Q: What is a foodborne illness and what are the symptoms?
A: A foodborne illness is a sickness caused by the consumption of improperly prepared or handled food. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhea. Additional symptoms may include a fever, headache, muscle ache, loss of appetite, weight loss, chills or dehydration.

Q: What do I do if I believe I have a foodborne illness?
A: Contact your doctor then your local health department or file a foodborne illness complaint with your local health department.

Q: How do I file a foodborne illness complaint?
A: To file a foodborne illness complaint call your local health department or fill out the Complaint Information Form and turn it into your local health department. The Complaint Information Form is located on the Chickahominy Health District Environmental Health Services webpage under Applications, Forms & Regulations.
Septic System & Wells:

**Q: How do I apply for a well or septic permit?**
A: To apply for a well or septic permit you must turn in two things to your local health department. The first is a completed [VDH Septic System & Well Construction Permit Application](#). The second, a plat of the property OR a site sketch showing: house location, preferred septic system and/or well location, property line, proposed driveway, detached garage, easements, cemetery sites, pools or additional plans, and neighboring septic systems or wells.

**Q: What are the fees associated with the onsite well or septic system programs and food service programs?**
A: Click on the following link for [Program Fees](#).

**Q: Can I install my own septic system or well?**
A: No, you must use a licensed well or septic driller, or installer. To find a licensed well or septic driller or installer go to the [DPOR website](#).

**Q: As a land owner, what can I do to assist the Environmental Health Specialists in receiving a well or septic construction permit?**
A: Filling out the [VDH Septic System & Well Construction Permit Application](#) as much as possible is the first step you can do to assist in your construction permit. Other ways to assist include: marking property lines, marking preferred locations for well and septic systems and marking proposed house location.

**Q: As a residential home owner, what can I do to help the Environmental Health Specialists from the local health department in repairing my failing drainfield or septic system?**
A: Fill out the Septic System Repair Questionnaire to assist in your drainfeild or septic system repair. Other actions that will help in the repair process include:
- Provide a sketch of the location including neighboring wells and septic systems
- Mark underground utilities
- Uncover distribution box
- Uncover septic tank after speaking to an Environmental Health Specialist and pumping it out
- If you have public utility lines, contact Miss Utility. Information may be found @ [http://www.missutilityofvirginia.com/](http://www.missutilityofvirginia.com/)
- If you have private utility lines, contact a local utility line service

**Q: How long are permits valid?**
A: Permit validity length varies for type of permit.
- **Well Construction Permit**: 54 months
- **Septic Construction Permit**: 18 months
- **Combined Well & Septic Construction Permit**: 18 months
- **Certification Letters**: Valid forever, but if you build within 18 months then fees do not have to be paid for permit. However, well fees will still apply.
Q: Once I’ve applied for my application how long does it take to be processed?
A:
- AOSE Designs- 15 Business Days
- Certification Letters- 20 Business Days
- Professional Engineer Design System- 60 Calendar Days
- VDH Design System- 15 Business Days. However, the Health Department is also responsible for other public health concerns, like rabies, natural disasters, and radiological exercises that may delay the process.

Q: How do I find out information on my septic system, well, or parcel of land?
A: To find out information on your septic system, well, or parcel of land fill out a FOIA FORM. This form is located under Application, Forms & Regulations on the Environmental Health Services webpage within the Chickahominy Health District website.

Q: Is there financial assistance available for onsite well or septic services?
A: For information on financial assistance, please visit the following websites
- Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc.: [http://www.sercap.org/virginia.htm](http://www.sercap.org/virginia.htm)

Q: What is the required distance between a well or septic system and a deck, swimming pool, drainfeild, house, sheds, garages and header lines?
A: Contact your local health department and discuss with an Environmental Health Specialist

Q: What do I do if I find an open well on my property?
A: Apply for a Well Abandonment Permit at your local health department.

Q: How can I find out the location of my Septic Tank?
A: Contact a Sewage Handler/Septic Contractor OR you may locate it yourself by following the sewer line from your house.

Q: Can I move my septic tank to construct something else in that location?
A: Possibly, you would need to fill out the VDH Septic System & Well Construction Permit Application to apply. An Environmental Health Specialist will make a site visit to determine if this is possible. You can find the application under Application, Forms & Regulations on the Environmental Health Services webpage within the Chickahominy Health District website.

Q: Can I install my own drainfeild and well to avoid public water and sewage in my house?
A: No, the county does not allow this.

Q: Why is there so much casing and grout around my well?
A: Casing and grout offer protection for your well.

Q: What is required to receive my Operation Permit and/or Record of Inspection for Septic or Well permits?
A: Use chart A as your guide.
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