

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 drainfield 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/>
- 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

VA Department of Housing and Community Development:

<http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/index.php/housing-programs-and-assistance/housing-programs.html>

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc.:

<http://www.sercap.org/virginia.htm>

USDA Rural Development:

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/Home.html>

Q: What is the required distance between a well or septic system and a deck, swimming pool, drainfield, 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 drainfield 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.

Chart A: Septic & Well Permits Checklist

	Virginia Department of Health (VDH) Design	Non VDH Design	Non VDH Alternative Design (AOSS)
VDH Inspection	*		
Non VDH Inspection		*	*
Completion Statement for Septic Contractor	*	*	*
Design Completion Statement		*	*
Recordation			*
O & M			*
GW-2 Well Log/Uniform Well Drillers Log	*	*	*
Negative Total Coliform Results	*	*	*
EHSS Well Inspection	*	*	*