

Frequently Asked Environmental Health Questions for Food Services & Onsite Septic and Well Services

Food Program Questions and Answers:

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.

How do I file a complaint about a restaurant in Charles City, Goochland County, Hanover County or New Kent County?

- A: To file a restaurant complaint, please contact the county health department where the restaurant is located or email your complaint details along with the restaurant location to Chickahominy.ehss@vdh.virginia.gov. To report a foodborne illness suspected to be received from a restaurant, see below under “how do I file a foodborne illness complaint”.

Where can I find Virginia restaurant inspections online?

- To find Virginia restaurant inspections, visit the [Virginia Department of Health’s Health Districts Site](#) page and select [View Inspections for Chickahominy Health District](#).

Foodborne Illness Questions and Answers:

What is a foodborne illness and what are the symptoms?

- 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.

What do I do if I believe I have a foodborne illness?

- Contact your doctor then your local health department or file a foodborne illness complaint with your local health department.

How do I file a foodborne illness complaint?

- To file a foodborne illness complaint, call your local health department or fill out the My Meal Detective Suspected Foodborne Illness Report. The [My Meal Detective Form](#) is located on the Chickahominy Health District Environmental Health Services webpage under *Food Safety and Services*.

Septic System and Wells Questions and Answers:

How do I apply for a well or septic permit?

- 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 is a completed construction permit design packet from a Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation (DPOR) licensed Onsite Soil Evaluator or Professional Engineer. A list of licensed service providers can be found here [on the VDH website](#).

What are the fees associated with the onsite well or septic system programs and food service programs?

- Click on the following link for [onsite well and septic system programs](#) or [food service programs](#).

Can I install my own septic system or well?

- No, you must use a DPOR licensed septic installer or well driller. To find a licensed septic installer, or well driller, view a list of [Septic System and Private Well Service Providers](#) on VDH's webpage or the DPOR's [License Lookup](#) webpage.

How long are permits valid?

- Permit validity length varies for type of permit.
 - Well Construction Permit**- 18 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 a permit. However, well fees will still apply
 - Food Service Programs**- Most must be renewed annually. Temporary Event Vendor Permit lengths vary.

Once I've applied for my application how long does it take to be processed?

- Environmental Health staff have up to the number of business and/or calendar days below to process the applications:
 - AOSE Designs**- 15 Business Days
 - Certification Letters**- 20 Business Days
 - Professional Engineer Design System**- 20 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.
 - Subdivision Approvals**- 60 Calendar Days
 - Foodservice Plan Review**- 30 Calendar Days

How do I find out information on my septic system, well, or parcel of land?

- To find out information on your septic system, well, or parcel of land make a Freedom of Information Act request on [NextRequest](#), contact the health department office of the county where the parcel is located, or send an email to Chickahominy.ehss@vdh.virginia.gov.

Is there financial assistance available for onsite well or septic services?

- For information on financial assistance, please visit the following websites:
 - [Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development](#)
 - [Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc.](#)
 - [USDA Rural Development](#)

What is the required distance between a well or septic system and a deck, swimming pool, drainfield, house, sheds, garages and header lines?

A: Common setbacks for [septic system components](#) and [wells](#) can be found in the state regulations. Contact your local health department to discuss your specific situation with an Environmental Health Specialist.

What do I do if I find an open well on my property?

- If you do not intend to use this well for any purpose, then you would apply for a well abandonment permit at your local health department. We recommend covering the well with a well cover to prevent any persons, animals, or contaminants from entering the well.

How can I find out the location of my Septic Tank?

- A: You can request a copy of your septic records on [NextRequest](#). If the health department has no records, you can contact a Sewage Handler/Septic Contractor OR you may locate it yourself by following the sewer line from your house.

Can I move my septic tank to construct something else in that location?

- A: Possibly, you will need to contact an Onsite Soil Evaluator to determine if there is another suitable location for the septic tank and then draw up the application paperwork.

Can I install my own drain field and well to avoid public water and sewage in my house?

- No, the county does not allow this.

Why is there so much casing and grout around my well?

- Casing and grout offer protection for your well.

What is required to receive my Operation Permit and/or Record of Inspection for Septic or Well permits?

- Use Table A: Septic and Well Permits Checklist on page 4 as your guide.

Table A: Septic & Well Permits Checklist

	Well Only Permit	Septic and Well Combined Permit- Conventional	Septic and Well Combined Permit- Alternative Design (AOSS)
Onsite Soil Evaluator or Professional Engineer Septic Inspection		*	*
Completion Statement from Septic Contractor		*	*
Recordation			*
O & M Manual			*
GW-2 Well Log/Uniform Well Drillers Log	*	*	*
Negative Total Coliform Results	*	*	*
VDH EHSS Well Inspection	*	*	*

For any questions about this document, please call [\(804\) 365-4313](tel:8043654313) or email <mailto:Chickahominy.ehss@vdh.virginia.gov>