



Randy E. Hayman, Water Commissioner

**SEWAGE FACILITIES PLANNING  
FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS LOCATED WITHIN THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA**

The Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act (Act 537, as amended) requires that sewage facilities planning be conducted for any proposed residential or commercial development that will generate sewage. Sewage facilities planning is a process that will determine if the City's existing sewage collection, conveyance, and treatment facilities have the capacity to handle sewage flow from a proposed residential or commercial development. The following instructions are applicable to proposed developments located within the City of Philadelphia only. For proposed developments located outside the City of Philadelphia, please contact the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) or the municipality in which the proposed project is located for further instructions regarding sewage facilities planning.

The first step in the planning process is for the developer or project sponsor to complete a PADEP Sewage Facilities Planning Module Application Mailer. A copy of the Application Mailer is attached. The attached Application Mailer should only be used for projects located within the City of Philadelphia that propose to connect to a public sewer. *For projects proposing the use of onlot sewage disposal systems or retaining tanks, please contact the Philadelphia Water Department for further instructions before completing the Application Mailer.*

The completed Application Mailer (Form 3800-CD-WSFR0359, dated 4/2007) is **e-mailed** to the office of the Water Department's Sewage Enforcement Officer: [Eric.Ponert@phila.gov](mailto:Eric.Ponert@phila.gov)

Eric Ponert, SEO  
Philadelphia Water Department  
1101 Market Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19107-2994

**DO NOT SUBMIT OR MAIL THE COMPLETED APPLICATION TO PADEP.**

The information contained in the Application Mailer will allow the Water Department to determine whether further sewage facilities planning (an additional application process) is required, if the proposed new development qualifies for an exemption from further sewage facilities planning, or if the proposed project does not meet the definition of a subdivision under Act 537.

Should the project require further sewage facilities planning and the completion of a PADEP Sewage Facilities Planning Module, the Water Department will inform the developer or the project sponsor which components of the Planning Module must be completed and submitted to the Water Department for further review. Upon approval of the Planning Module by the Water Department, the Water Department will submit the Planning Module to PADEP for final review and approval. The Sewage Facilities Act (Act 537) established a fee for the PADEP planning module review and PADEP will calculate the review fee and invoice the developer or the project sponsor.

For additional information or questions, please contact Mr. Ponert by telephone at 215-685-6353 or e-mail at [Eric.Ponert@phila.gov](mailto:Eric.Ponert@phila.gov).

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING SEWAGE FACILITIES PLANNING MODULE APPLICATION MAILER

(remove before sending mailer to the approving agency (the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) or delegated local agency))

Please read the following instructions carefully before completing the application mailer. This information will be used to determine if sewage facilities planning is necessary for your project, and, if it is, which forms are appropriate.

Act 537 Sewage Facilities' planning is the duty of local municipalities. The responsibility of meeting the sewage disposal needs of the municipality rests with the municipality. Each municipality is required to have an Act 537 Official Sewage Facilities Plan to adequately address these needs. Adoption by resolution of a planning module is the vehicle for legally amending the municipality's Official Plan. It is imperative that the municipality receives all of the information required in order to make informed decisions.

Unless your project qualifies for one of the planning exemptions provided in Act 537, a package of sewage facilities planning forms appropriate for the project will be sent to the return address indicated on the mailer, or instructions for obtaining the appropriate forms from DEP's Web site ([www.depweb.state.pa.us](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us)) will be issued. Each form includes detailed instructions that explain the use of the form and how to complete it. The package of completed forms and its supporting documentation is called a **sewage facilities planning module**, or "planning module." Once the planning module is complete, it must be submitted to the municipality in which the project is located for review and, if acceptable, adoption.

After adoption by the municipality, planning modules are submitted to either DEP or, if appropriate, to the delegated agency for review and final action. Some municipalities (or groups of municipalities working together) have requested and received DEP approval to review and take final action on planning modules. These are known as **delegated agencies**. To find out if your project is located in an area served by a delegated agency, contact the municipality or DEP's regional office serving your area.

Please note that both DEP and delegated agencies are required by law to charge fees for the review of planning modules. The fees DEP must charge are set by law in Act 537, while delegated agencies may set fees which can be the same or different from those in Act 537. For more information on review fees for your particular project, see the planning module documents or contact the approving agency (DEP or delegated agency) serving the area of your project.

NOTE: DEP will provide all planning module forms, however, if your project is a **minor subdivision** (defined as a subdivision of 10 lots or less, intended for single family residential homes served by individual onlot sewage disposal systems) you may also contact the municipality in which your project is located for a "Component 1" minor subdivision planning module form.

1. Print the name of the proposed development and name, address and telephone number of the person who is proposing the project. If planning module components are to be sent to a different person or address, include this information on the front of the mailer in the return address block.
2.
  - a. Enter the county in which the project is located.
  - b. Enter the municipality in which the project is located.
  - c. Enter the road or address (if available) or street coordinates (example - west side of T-235, 1 mile south of intersection of Rt 15 and T-235).
  - d. Enter the name of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangle map which contains the project area, and the location of the project area on that map in inches up and over from the lower right corner of the map to the approximate center of the project. (Example - Centerville West quad, 7 inches up and 2.5 inches over from lower right corner of map.) Alternatively, include an original or a copy of the USGS quad map with the project area outlined on it.

3. Check the box that best describes the intended use of the proposed land development project. **Residential** refers to single-family lots. **Multi-residential** includes apartments, condos, etc. **Commercial** includes retail centers, office parks, industrial development, etc. **Institutional** refers to schools, hospitals and the like. **Brownfield Site Redevelopment** refers to projects proposing to recycle land. Some developments will involve more than one type of use, or will not fit comfortably into any of the classifications given. If this is the case, choose more than one category or explain under **Other**.
4.
  - a. Enter the number of single family residential lots or Equivalent Dwelling Units (EDUs) proposed. An EDU is defined as that part of a multi-family dwelling or nonresidential project with flows equal to 400 gallons per day

(gpd) (the assumed flow, for planning purposes, of a single family residential lot). To determine the number of EDUs, divide the proposed sewage flow of the project by 400 gpd.

b. Enter the total number of lots created from this parcel of land since May 15, 1972, including the lots being proposed at this time. (Onlot disposal proposals only.)

c. Enter the total project acreage and the acreage of any remaining land (land not proposed for development but under the same ownership and adjacent to the project area).

5. Enter the proposed total sewage flow from the project in gpd. See Title 25 of the Pennsylvania Code, Chapter 73, Section 73.17, ([www.pacode.com](http://www.pacode.com)), or DEP's *Domestic Wastewater Facilities Manual*, DEP ID: 362-0300-001 available on DEP's Web site at [www.depweb.state.pa.us](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us), Keyword: "wastewater."

6. Choose the category (a, b, c or d) that describes the method of sewage disposal planned to serve the project and enter the information requested. Since this information could have an effect on the planning requirements for your project, be as accurate as possible. If more than one method of sewage disposal is planned, or if an interim method is planned, indicate it here.

a. Sewerage System

If an existing system is being extended to serve the proposed project, or if lots are to connect directly to an existing sewage collection system, check all boxes that describe the project.

Write in the names of the existing collection systems that will be used, the interceptor sewer which will be used for conveyance and the treatment facility where the sewage flows will be treated. Include the National Pollutant Elimination Discharge System (NPDES) permit number for the treatment facility, where applicable.

b. Construction of Sewage Treatment Facility (with stream discharge or with spray irrigation as final disposal option)

Check the box corresponding to the chosen final disposal option (stream discharge or spray irrigation field). This category does **NOT** include individual residence spray irrigation systems (IRSIS) which are considered onlot sewage disposal systems (c), below). For stream discharges, name the receiving waterbody. If the proposed facility is intended to replace an existing, malfunctioning onlot system, check the box marked "repair."

c. Onlot Sewage Disposal Systems (individual, community, or large-volume)

Check the box corresponding to the type of onlot sewage disposal systems proposed to serve the project. An **individual onlot sewage disposal system** is a system of piping, tanks or other facilities used for collecting, treating and disposing of sewage into a subsurface absorption area. This category also includes IRSIS. A **community onlot system** is a facility either publicly or privately owned which will collect and dispose of sewage from two or more lots or EDUs into a subsurface absorption area. A **large-volume onlot system** is an individual or community onlot system which is designed to treat flows in excess of 10,000 gpd.

The approving agency must be notified at least 10 days in advance of all soil testing activities (including those related to planning exemption requests - see 7(b)(5)(v)), so that its staff have the option of observing the tests.

d. Retaining Tanks (holding tanks or privies)

If retaining tanks are proposed as the method of sewage disposal, enter the number of holding tanks or privies which are proposed to serve the project.

7. Check this box if you desire to obtain your sewage facilities planning module forms from DEP's Web site. You will be provided with appropriate instructions, Web site addresses and DEP coding information in a letter rather than a package of paper forms.

8. Requests for Planning Exemption under the Sewage Facilities Act

You may request to be exempt from Act 537 planning requirements. Effective December 15, 1995, certain classes of subdivisions are no longer subject to the planning requirements of the Sewage Facilities Act. Completing Section 8 will help you and the approving agency determine if your project fits into one of these categories.

a. Protection of rare, endangered or threatened species.

DEP's technical guidance document "Policy for Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) Coordination During Permit Review and Evaluation," (400-0200-001) requires DEP to ensure that requests for authorizations,

are coordinated with the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources' (DCNR) Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI).

Conducting a search of the PNDI database and providing a copy of a "PNDI Project Environmental Review Receipt" for the proposed project and, if potential impacts are identified by the search, clearance or recommendation letters from the jurisdictional agency responsible for the particular species identified by a search, satisfies this requirement.

To avoid project delay, self-explanatory, self-conducted "PNDI Project Planning Environmental Review" searches are initiated at [www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us](http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us). This interactive, online search will ask questions about the proposed project and provide the appropriate receipt, instructions or additional information regarding coordination with jurisdictional agencies.

As an alternative to the self-conducted search, project sponsors may request DEP staff to conduct the search by providing a completed "PNDI Project Planning & Environmental Review Form" (PNDI Form). The form is available at [www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us](http://www.naturalheritage.state.pa.us). Individuals making this request should be aware that, due to the nature of the search software, DEP staff may need to contact them for additional information to successfully complete the search and that exclusive of any other items, their sewage planning exemption request is considered incomplete by DEP, until the appropriate receipt, clearance or recommendation letters are received.

For more information, see the "Policy for Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) Coordination During Permit Review and Evaluation," (400-0200-001), available online in the eLibrary at DEP's Web site address [www.depweb.state.pa.us](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us).

- b. Attach a plot plan for the proposed project. The plan must depict anticipated lots to be created, either estimated sewer line runs (public sewer proposals),

or site suitability test locations and Site Investigation and Percolation Test Reports (onlot proposals).

- c. Projects proposing use of onlot sewage disposal systems

- (1) Information Required from the Municipality

The municipality in which the project is located (identified in Item 2.b. of the matter) should determine if the municipality's Official Sewage Facilities Plan shows that the area planned for the project is to be served by onlot sewage disposal systems. If it is, the municipality should indicate this by having an authorized municipal official sign and date the form in the space provided. The official's name and title should be printed on the line below. In the absence of a municipal signature, the applicant should submit evidence that the approved matter was submitted to the municipality for signature. Upon receipt of this evidence, the approving agency will make an independent determination based on the most recent Official Sewage Facilities Plan.

- (2) Information Required from the Municipal Sewage Enforcement Officer (SEO)

The municipality's SEO must conduct personally, observe or otherwise confirm in a manner approved by DEP, site testing on each proposed lot in the subdivision (including any remaining land) to determine that separate sites are available for both a permitted primary onlot sewage disposal system and a replacement system (to be used if the original system fails in the future). If the SEO finds that each lot has been tested properly and fulfils these criteria, the SEO must indicate this by signing and dating the form in the space provided. His/her name and certification number should be printed on the line below.

- (3) Information Required from the Applicant

The person proposing the subdivision, or his/her authorized agent, must determine if each lot in the subdivision (including the remaining land, if any) is at least one (1) acre in size. If they are, the applicant or his/her agent must indicate this by signing and dating the form in the space provided.

- (4) Determinations Made by the Approving Agency

When the above listed information is received, the approving agency will determine the following:

- (a) If the geology of the project area is conducive to nitrate-nitrogen contamination of groundwater (determined from the topographic map location information); or

(b) If elevated levels of nitrate-nitrogen are known to exist within one-quarter (1/4) mile of the proposed development (determined from agency groundwater sampling records in existence at the time of the application); or

(c) If the area proposed for development is within an identified High Quality (HQ) or Exceptional Value (EV) watershed (determined from the topographic map location).

Following this investigation, the approving agency will render a decision on the exemption request within 10 working days of receiving the request for exemption. Both the applicant and municipality will be notified of the decision. If the request cannot be granted, the person named in the return address block will receive the proper planning module component forms (or instructions to obtain them from the DEP Web site) along with the notification of the decision, including the reason(s) that the request cannot be granted.

d. Projects proposing use of public sewerage facilities (i.e., ownership by municipality or authority)

(1) Information Required from the Municipality

The municipality in which the proposed project is located (identified in Item 2.b. of the mailer) will determine the following from written documentation requested and obtained by the applicant from the facility permittee. ***This documentation MUST also be sent to the approving agency (DEP or delegated local agency) for evaluation.***

(a) Certification from the permittees of the collection, conveyance and treatment facilities proposed for use that capacity is available in these facilities to receive and treat the sewage flows from the proposed project; and

(b) That these added flows will not cause an overload or 5-year projected overload in the facilities.

If the facilities proposed for use are owned and operated by an authority, or authorities, then attach a letter from each to the mailer.

If this written certification has been submitted by the applicant, an authorized municipal official should sign and date the form and print his/her name and title and the municipality name in the spaces provided.

NOTE: Since planning is a municipal responsibility, sewer authorities involved should make required information available but should **NOT** sign the mailer as the authorized municipal official.

In the absence of a municipal signature, the applicant should submit evidence to the approving agency that the written certification, described in b.(1) above, was submitted to the appropriate municipal official. Upon receipt of the evidence and the written certification, the approving agency will make an independent determination of the available capacity to serve the proposed new land development.

(2) Determinations Made by the Approving Agency

When the above listed information is received by the approving agency, the approving agency will determine the following (from DEP records):

(a) That the existing collection, conveyance and treatment facilities are in compliance;

(b) That the existing facilities have no existing or 5-year projected overload;

(c) That the municipality has a currently approved Official Sewage Facilities Plan which is being implemented; and

(d) That the project does not propose service by facilities needing a new or modified permit from DEP under the Clean Streams Law.

Following this investigation, the approving agency will render a decision on the exemption request within 10 working days of receiving the request for exemption. Both the applicant and the municipality will be notified of the decision. If the request cannot be granted, the person named in the return address block will receive the proper planning module component forms (or instructions to obtain them from DEP's Web site) along with the notification of the decision, including the reason that the request cannot be granted.

If unsure of which local DEP office to contact, the following DEP regional offices will assist you in determining the appropriate local DEP office that serves your specific municipality.

If you need more information or assistance, please contact your local DEP office.

## **DEP REGIONAL OFFICES**

### **Southeast Region**

2 E. Main St.  
Norristown, PA 19401  
Main Telephone: 484-250-5900  
24-Hour Emergency: 484-250-5900

**Counties:** *Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia*

### **Northwest Region**

230 Chestnut St.  
Meadville, PA 16335-3481  
Main Telephone: 814-332-6945  
24-Hour Emergency: 1-800-373-3398

**Counties:** *Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Venango and Warren*

### **Southwest Region**

400 Waterfront Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4745  
Main Telephone: 412-442-4000  
24-Hour Emergency: 412-442-4000

**Counties:** *Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington and Westmoreland*

### **Northeast Region**

2 Public Square  
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711-0790  
Main Telephone: 570-826-2511  
24-Hour Emergency: 570-826-2511

**Counties:** *Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming*

### **Southcentral Region**

909 Elmerton Ave.  
Harrisburg, PA 17110  
Main Telephone: 717-705-4700  
24-Hour Emergency: 1-877-333-1904

**Counties:** *Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry and York*

### **Northcentral Region**

208 W. Third St., Suite 101  
Williamsport, PA 17701  
Main Telephone: 570-327-3636  
24-Hour Emergency: 570-327-3636

**Counties:** *Bradford, Cameron, Clearfield, Centre, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga and Union*

1. Development Information

Name of Development \_\_\_\_\_
Developer Name \_\_\_\_\_
Address \_\_\_\_\_
Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location of Development

a. County \_\_\_\_\_
b. Municipality \_\_\_\_\_
c. Address or Coordinates \_\_\_\_\_

d. USGS Quad Name \_\_\_\_\_
inches up \_\_\_\_\_ over \_\_\_\_\_
from bottom right corner of map.

3. Type of Development Proposed

(check appropriate box)
Residential Multi-Residential
Describe \_\_\_\_\_
Commercial Institutional
Describe \_\_\_\_\_
Brownfield Site Redevelopment
Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Size

a. # of lots \_\_\_\_\_ # of EDUs \_\_\_\_\_
b. # of lots since 5/15/79 \_\_\_\_\_
c. Development Acreage \_\_\_\_\_
d. Remaining Acreage \_\_\_\_\_

5. Sewage Flows \_\_\_\_\_ gpd

6. Proposed Sewage Disposal Method

(check appropriate boxes)
a. Sewerage System
Existing (connection only) New (extension)
Public Private
Pump Station(s)/Force Main Gravity

Name of existing system being extended \_\_\_\_\_
Interceptor Name \_\_\_\_\_
Treatment Facility Name \_\_\_\_\_
NPDES Permit # \_\_\_\_\_
b. Construction of Treatment Facility
With Stream Discharge
With Land Application (not including IRSIS)
Other
Repair?
Name of waterbody where point of discharge is proposed (if stream discharge) \_\_\_\_\_

c. Onlot Sewage Disposal Systems (check appropriate box)
Individual onlot system(s) (including IRSIS)
Community onlot system
Large-Volume onlot system
d. Retaining tanks
Number of Holding Tanks \_\_\_\_\_
Number of Privies \_\_\_\_\_

7. Request Sewage Facilities Planning Module forms in electronic format

8. Request for Planning Exemption

a. Protection of rare, endangered or threatened species
Check one:
The "PNDI Project Environmental Review Receipt" is attached. or
A completed "PNDI Project Planning & Environmental Review Form," (PNDI Form) is attached. I request DEP staff to complete the required PNDI search for my project. I realize that my planning exemption will be considered incomplete and that the DEP processing of my planning exemption request will be delayed, until a "PNDI Project Environmental Review Receipt" and all supporting documentation from jurisdictional agencies (when necessary) is/are received by DEP.

Applicant or Consultant Initials \_\_\_\_\_

b. Plot Plan Attached Site Reports Attached

c. Onlot Disposal Systems

(1) I certify that the Official Plan shows this area as an onlot service area.

(Signature of Municipal Official) Date
Name (Print) Title

Municipality (must be same as in 2.b.)

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

(2) I certify that each lot in this subdivision has been tested and is suitable for both a primary and replacement sewage disposal system.

(Signature of SEC) Date
Name (Print) Certification #

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_

(3) I certify that each lot in this subdivision is at least 1 acre in size

(Signature of Project Applicant/Agent) Date

d. Public Sewerage Service (i.e., ownership by municipality or authority)

Based upon written documentation, I certify that the facilities proposed for use have capacity and that no overload exists or is projected within 5 years. (Attach documents)

(Signature of Municipal Official) Date
Name (Print) Title

Municipality (must be same as in 2.b.)

Telephone # \_\_\_\_\_