

**SEWAGE FACILITIES PLANNING MODULE  
APPLICATION MAILER**



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION

For more information, visit DEP's website at  
[www.depweb.state.pa.us](http://www.depweb.state.pa.us), keyword: Act 537.

## 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.

Upon completion, submit this Mailer / Application form to the approving agency (DEP or delegated local agency). Additionally, provide a copy of the completed form to the County Health Department having jurisdiction over the area in which the proposed project is located.

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 website ([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, complete 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, telephone number and email address 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 appropriate tax parcel identification number (if available) of the parcel proposed for subdivision.
  - e. 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.
  - f. If the proposed project is located within a special protection watershed, (i.e., watersheds with a stream classification of High Quality or Exceptional Value), check "yes." If not located in special protection watershed, check "no."
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 website 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 website. You will be provided with appropriate instructions, website 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 website 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 mailer) 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.

(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 fulfills 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 website) 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.

(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 website) 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*

### **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*

### **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*

### **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*

### **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*

### **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*



Return Correspondence/Forms to:

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

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DEP USE	
<b>Components Sent</b>	
Onlot Disposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collection and Treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planning Agency Review	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exempt from Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Code	_____
Date	_____

"Fold Here"

