



# County of Santa Cruz

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## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

701 OCEAN STREET, ROOM 312, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073

(831) 454-2022 FAX: (831) 454-3128 TDD: (831) 454-2123

[www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/eh/ehhome.htm](http://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/eh/ehhome.htm)

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

### PROCEDURES TO OBTAIN CHANGES TO SEPTIC CONSTRAINT AREAS

Certain areas of Santa Cruz County have been identified as having constraints for individual disposal systems. Constraint areas include locations where there are high groundwater conditions, or poor soil conditions and/or septic problems, or where there is primary groundwater recharge.

Application for a sewage disposal permit will not be accepted in a septic constraint area unless the property to be served by the system contains at least 15,000 square feet. A person who believes his/her property has been included in a constraint area boundary in error may seek a change to the mapping in accordance with procedures established in County Code Section 7.38.050.

### CHANGES TO CONSTRAINT AREA DESIGNATED PRIMARY GROUNDWATER RECHARGE AREAS

1. An applicant may seek removal from the septic constraint areas by employing, at the applicant's expense, a California registered hydro geologist, geologist, or certified engineering geologist, satisfactory to the Santa Cruz County Planning Department, to prepare a study demonstrating that the property is not in a groundwater recharge area. The study must be prepared according to the attached Guidelines For Geological reports to support removal From Septic Constraint Areas Designated As Primary Groundwater Recharge and demonstrate that the property is not within a primary groundwater recharge area as defined in the Santa Cruz County General Plan. These guidelines set forth the criteria for determining and defining groundwater recharge areas. (See Attachment A for Guidelines)
2. The study shall be submitted to Environmental Health Service with payment of a fee as determined by the Board of Supervisors resolution.
3. The study shall be forwarded to the County geologist, who shall make a finding and recommendation to the Health Officer for retaining or excluding the property from the constraint area.
4. If the Health Officer, in exercising his/her discretion, determines that the property should be excluded from the groundwater recharge constraint area based upon the foregoing, the property shall be excluded.

5. Decisions of the Health Officer shall be final and shall not be appealable.

CHANGES TO AREAS DESIGNATED HIGH GROUNDWATER, POOR SOIL CONDITIONS, OR SEPTIC PROBLEM AREAS

1. An applicant may seek removal from the septic constraint or septic problem area by employing, at the applicant's expense, a California registered civil engineer, a California registered environmental health specialist, or a California registered geologist, experienced in the design of individual sewage disposal systems. The qualified expert shall prepare a study demonstrating that there are no groundwater or soil conditions or other septic problems which could affect groundwater, surface water, or public health. The study must be prepared according to guidelines adopted by the Health Officer. These guidelines shall set forth the criteria for determining the presence of groundwater, poor soil conditions or other septic problems. (See Attachment B for Guidelines)
2. The study shall be submitted to the Director of Environmental Health with payment of a fee as determined by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors by resolution.
3. If the Health Officer in exercising his discretion determines that the property should be excluded based upon the foregoing procedures from the high groundwater or poor soil condition areas, then the property shall be excluded.
4. Decisions of the Health Officer shall be final and shall not be appealable.

Attachment: "A" (Guidelines for Geologic Reports to Support Removal from Septic Constraint Areas Designated as Primary Groundwater Recharge)

Attachment: "B" (Guidelines for Reports to Support Removal from Septic Constraint Areas Designated as High Groundwater and/or Poor Soil Conditions and Septic Problems Areas)

## ATTACHMENT "A"

### **GUIDELINES FOR GEOLOGIC REPORTS TO SUPPORT REMOVAL FROM SEPTIC CONSTRAINT AREA DESIGNATED AS PRIMARY GROUNDWATER RECHARGE**

The following are minimum requirements for geologic investigations. The geologic investigation must be prepared by a California registered hydro geologist, geologist, or certified engineering geologist, satisfactory to the Santa Cruz County Planning Department. In particular cases, due to specific concerns with regard to the proposed project, additional information may be requested. In every case however, the submitted report must at a minimum cover these items, or it will be returned for completion prior to official review and consideration. Primary groundwater recharge areas are those areas having soils estimated by Soil Conservation Service's Soil Survey Of Santa Cruz County, California (1968) to have permeabilities of 2 inches per hour or more overlying water bearing rocks used for major water supplies.

#### 1. SITE DATA AND IDENTIFICATION

- A. Project Description - land use and structure planned
- B. Location
  - 1) In general and geologic terms
  - 2) Regional topographic map (1" - 2000')

#### 2. SCOPE

- A. List methods of investigation used (aerial photos, borings, field investigation, etc.) and firms and individuals who participated.
- B. If the level of investigation varies within the site, explain how and why.

#### 4. THE INVESTIGATION

- A. A site plan consisting of topographic-geologic map (1" - 500') indicating pertinent features of the site including project location, proposed structures, roads, setbacks, non-developable land, building envelopes, etc.
- B. Discussion of regional geologic and hydrologic conditions relative to the site. Include a cross section of the site, referenced to the site plan.
- C. Description of surface and subsurface materials on the site and their distribution (i.e. bedrock, soils, fill, etc.) based on a number of borings of sufficient depth, in appropriate locations to adequately define subsurface conditions on the site. One boring shall be at least deep enough to determine the depth to water table. Other borings shall demonstrate the soil profile 20 feet below the proposed leaching trench depth.
- D. Specific field and laboratory tests required to determine the characteristics of the soil and other site conditions pertinent to groundwater movement. These will include

percolation tests as required by Environmental Health's Soil Test Procedures handout, and sieve analysis of each soil horizon exhibiting differing characteristics. The data from such tests must be included in the report. Surface soils should be compared to soil descriptions prepared by Soil Conservation Service. Laboratory tests of permeability are not comparable to permeability rates estimated by the Soil Conservation Service and should not be submitted.

- E. Evaluation of the potential individual and cumulative impact on contamination of groundwater from the proposed septic system including consideration of the depth to the local water table, potential planes of permeability.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. Analysis of data from tests conducted on the site and conclusions drawn (i.e., do boring and soil maps draw similar conclusions?)
- B. Discussion of the site conditions with respect to the County primary groundwater recharge criteria, and the reasons why the data supports a finding that the property was included in error within the boundary of the recharge area (i.e. mapping error)

6. REFERENCES

- A. Bibliography adequately referencing all data and conclusions.
- B. Signatures and registration numbers of the geologist preparing the report.