



Wet Weather Septic System Installations

The Nevada County Environmental Health Department wants to remind you that installing septic systems during the wet soil conditions in certain types of soil will smear and compact. This could result in a significant reduction in the life of the septic system. Premature failure of the septic system could result, creating a health hazard and requiring costly and difficult repairs.

Section T-052, Standard System Requirements, 13-E of the Sewage Disposal Ordinance states that "Systems shall not be installed when moist or wet conditions cause trench side wall or bottom area degradation of soil structure and porosity (which frequently appears as smearing and compaction.)"

If a septic system is installed under wet soil conditions and EH staff discover during their inspection that the trenches have been compromised, the system could be rejected and require new leach lines be installed. In some cases this might require a whole new design in a new location. This could result in delays of occupancy of the home. In light of the importance of this issue, you are strongly encouraged to avoid installing septic systems during wet weather soil conditions. If you do install a septic system under these condition, be certain to get the consultants approval. Wet weather season typically runs from October through April, depending on precipitation received.

Open trench inspections are recommended by the consultant for any system installed during the wet weather season. In the future, certain septic permits may be issued with the open trench inspection as a requirement. Be sure to refer to the consultant for special design system inspection requirements as well as any Department permit requirements and conditions on the face of the septic permit.