



POWTS Maintenance Program Expansion

Marathon County adopted a POWTS maintenance program in 1980 and currently administers a program which includes all POWTS installed since 1980.

Recent changes to Wisconsin Administrative Code mandate that all counties now include every POWTS, regardless of age, in their maintenance program.

To comply with this regulation, Marathon County has completed an inventory of all POWTS in the county.

In the near future, the owners of POWTS installed before 1980 will be informed of new maintenance program requirements and will be required to maintain their POWTS in accordance with state and county regulations.



Tank Cover Locks

For health and safety reasons, tank access openings (called manholes) which extend above the ground surface must be kept covered and locked.

It is the property owner's responsibility to be sure that covers remain in place and locked or secured to prevent unauthorized access.

Maintenance report forms require plumbers and pumpers to report missing locks to the county.

SEPTIC TANK ADDITIVES

While there is no accepted test method to prove septic tank additives work or don't work, some products are actually harmful.

In Wisconsin, all additives must be reviewed by the Department of Safety & Professional Services prior to sale for proof they will not harm the user, bacterial action in the system, soil absorption or groundwater quality.

If you choose to use an additive, be sure the product has Department of Safety & Professional Services approval.

This brochure is intended to give a summary of Marathon County's POWTS maintenance requirements.

Complete requirements can be found in the General Code of Ordinances for Marathon County, Chapter 15, Private Sewage Systems, and in Chapter SPS 383, Wisconsin Administrative Code.

Chapter SPS 383 can be found at <https://dps.wi.gov/Pages/Programs/POWTS/Default.aspx>.

To view Chapter 15 or find forms and contractor lists, please visit our website at the address below (look for "Conservation, Planning & Zoning Department" under the "Departments" tab).



Marathon County Conservation, Planning & Zoning Department

210 River Drive
Wausau WI 54403

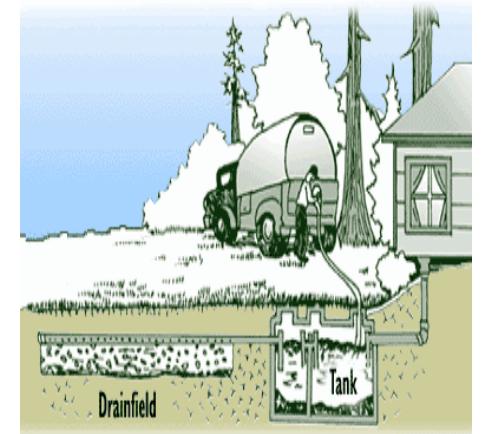
Phone: 715-261-6000

Fax: 715-261-6016

Website: www.co.marathon.wi.us

What you should know about

Maintaining Your Private Sewage System



POWTS Maintenance requirements of the Marathon County Private Sewage System Ordinance



Marathon County has a mandatory private sewage system (POWTS) maintenance program. If you own a property served by a POWTS, you are required to have your system maintained and submit maintenance reports to the county.

SEPTIC TANK MAINTENANCE

Most POWTS, other than holding tanks, will have a septic tank. Conventional, at-grade and mound systems all have septic tanks.

Maintenance of these POWTS involves having the system visually inspected every 3 years and having tank(s) pumped if sludge and scum occupy more than 1/3 of the tank volume. The inspection will determine whether pumping of your tank is needed.

Inspection may be done by licensed Master Plumber, Journeyman Plumber, POWTS Inspector, POWTS Maintainer or Certified Septage Servicing Operator (pumper).

Most POWTS installed after 2000 have effluent filters which need periodic cleaning and may require additional maintenance as specified in the management plan for the system. Management plans can be found in the sanitary permit record at the Conservation, Planning & Zoning Department.

Proper maintenance will keep the system working properly and help extend it's life. Inspection will help identify potential problems with your system. Pumping the tank, inspecting the baffles, and cleaning the filter will help keep unwanted materials from flowing into and prematurely clogging the distribution cell(s).

HOLDING TANK MAINTENANCE

Holding tanks are POWTS which collect and hold all wastewater from your home. Because these systems do not include any treatment or disposal component, all sewage must be pumped and hauled away for proper disposal.

Maintenance of a holding tank system involves having your pumper empty the tank(s) each time they fill. Holding tanks are equipped with an alarm to warn you when the tank is nearly full.

It is not legal to empty holding tanks yourself or to discharge any wastes, including "gray water" (from laundry, sinks, showers, etc.) onto or into the ground.

The frequency of pumping depends upon the amount of water you use and the capacity of your holding tanks. Water conservation will reduce pumping frequency. Average wastewater volume is approximately 60 gallons per person per day.

Owners of a holding tank system are required to have a Servicing Contract with their pumper. Whenever there is a change in property ownership or pumper, a new contract must be completed and submitted to the Conservation, Planning and Zoning Department.

PRE-TREATMENT COMPONENTS

Some systems include a pre-treatment component, such as an aerobic treatment unit (ATU), a sand filter, or a disinfection unit. These are designed to improve the quality of wastewater being discharged from the POWTS.

These components typically require frequent maintenance (often more than once a year) which must be performed by a certified POWTS Maintainer. Owners of most pre-treatment components are required to maintain a servicing contract with their POWTS Maintainer.

If your system includes a pre-treatment component, please contact the Conservation, Planning & Zoning Department to review maintenance requirements.

MAINTENANCE REPORTING

Every time a POWTS is inspected, maintained, or serviced a report must be submitted electronically to this department by your POWTS professional on your behalf. Reports must be submitted within 30 days of completion.

If a required report is not received electronically, this department will contact you indicating you have not satisfied code requirements.

SYSTEM CARE AND USE

In addition to mandatory maintenance program requirements, proper care and use of your system will help keep your POWTS functioning properly and extend it's life:

- Limit the amount of water entering your system. Use water saving fixtures. Practice water conservation. Fix toilet float valves, leaks and dripping faucets.
- Divert surface water drainage away from the system.
- Do not connect footing drains or other "clear water" discharges to the system. Wastewater from laundry, sinks and showers is NOT clear water and MUST discharge to the system.
- Do not flush or put materials down drains that may clog the system (fats, grease, coffee grounds, paper towels, sanitary napkins, condoms, diapers, kitty litter, etc.).
- Do not put toxic substances in drains that might damage the system or end up in the groundwater (cleaning fluids, oils, paints, disinfectants, pesticides, mercury, etc.).
- Use of chemicals or additives to clean or "sweeten" your system is not recommended. These products do not eliminate the need to pump or maintain your system. "Starters" are not necessary for new systems or after pumping existing systems. (see the Septic Tank Additives section of this brochure).