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November 2013

## On-Site Wastewater and Water Wells

### How do I maintain my wastewater system?

There are three categories of on-site wastewater systems permitted in Sedgwick County: septic systems, lagoons and advanced wastewater systems. Each system requires a varying amount of ongoing maintenance to ensure the performance and longevity of the system.

1. **Septic system** maintenance includes:
  - Pumping the septic tank on a regular basis
  - Being aware of water use and avoiding water overuse inside the residence
  - Being aware of what is going down the drain
  - Landscape over the septic tank to prevent standing water and runoff
2. **Lagoon** maintenance requires:
  - Mowing the interior and exterior of the lagoon to prevent rodent intrusion (ex: muskrats), which destroy the berms
  - Keeping trees and weeds from growing in and around the lagoon. Plant growth inhibits wind and sunlight from reaching the lagoon; causes the lagoon to “work harder” to digest the weed and tree debris; and causes roots to penetrate the bottom and sides of the lagoon creating leaks.
3. **Advanced wastewater system** maintenance includes:
  - Being aware of water use and overuse
  - Landscape over the septic tank to prevent standing water and runoff
  - Hiring a service provider to maintain the system (ex: pumps, controls, etc.)

### When is a wastewater permit required?

If work is required on any system, ranging from minor repairs to full reconstruction, a permit must be obtained from Sedgwick County Code Enforcement. The permit must be issued to a Sedgwick County licensed wastewater installer.

Before you begin repairs on your wastewater system, contact a licensed wastewater installer to determine if your plan of action is legal and that the repairs are in compliance with state and county codes and regulations.

Information on operation and maintenance of wastewater systems is available by contacting Sedgwick County Code Enforcement or by visiting the Sedgwick County website at [www.sedgwickcounty.org](http://www.sedgwickcounty.org).



Example of an improperly maintained lagoon: plants have begun growing inside the lagoon.



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### **Why is it important to maintain water wells?**

Domestic water wells serve several purposes from providing water for consumption to providing irrigation for lawns and gardens. In some areas of Sedgwick County, groundwater is plentiful and easy to obtain; however, in other areas, it is difficult to find. In either case, it is desirable to protect that source from contamination. Once a well becomes contaminated, it is expensive to remediate and can potentially contaminate the area around the well, making it likely that drilling a new water well in the area will also lead to contamination.

### **How do I maintain my water well?**

There are some general guidelines for protecting the area around a wellhead to prevent contamination from surface sources.

- Keep the wellhead in good condition
- Do not attempt to repair the well yourself, unless you are licensed to do so
- If repairs are needed on a water well, state regulations require work that would alter the casing to be performed by a state of Kansas licensed well driller (Sedgwick County keeps a list of registered drillers)
- Work performed on the well requires a permit

### **When is a water well permit required?**

If your well is in need of repairs or replacement, contact a licensed water well driller to determine if your plan of action is legal and that the repairs are in compliance with state and county codes and regulations.

### **In general, how do I know if I need a permit?**

The best way to determine if the repairs you plan to do require a permit is to contact the Sedgwick County Code Enforcement office. We will work with you to answer your questions and explain the options available to help you remediate the problem you are encountering with your wastewater system or water well. And, visit the Sedgwick County website for information about your particular situation.



Example of an improper repair:  
water well with duct tape used as a sanitary seal.

### **For more information:**

Sedgwick County Code Enforcement  
1144 S. Seneca, Wichita, KS 67213  
Phone: 316-660-1840  
Fax: 316-383-7502  
Website: [www.sedgwickcounty.org](http://www.sedgwickcounty.org)