A COLLABORATION BETWEEN
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION
AND **VALLEY BOARD OF REALTORS®**

WASTEWATER & SEPTIC IN ALASKA

QUICK-GUIDE FOR REALTORS



YOUR QUICK GUIDE
TO CHECKING WASTEWATER & SEPTIC RECORDS IN ALASKA

SCAN THIS QR CODE TO VISIT THE DEC WEBSITE FOR MORE INFO

Identify the Lot & System Type:

UNDEVELOPED LOTS

- Suitability: Consult a local certified installer or registered engineer.
- Plat Notes: These are not replacement for a site-specific evaluation by a professional installer or engineer. Historic plat notes may be obsolete.

Identify the Lot & System Type: STEP 2

DEVELOPED LOTS (ONSITE vs. OFFSITE)

- **Onsite Residential/Commercial Wastewater Disposal Systems:** Proceed to "Search for the Record." This is one of the most common scenarios along with properties connected to city utilities.
- **Dry Cabins and Facilities utilizing Outhouses and/or Composting/Incinerating Toilets:** Generally do not require explicit DEC approval except for graywater systems if present. Must be installed away from wells/surface water and never in a floodplain. Refer to the Onsite Wastewater System Installation Manual (OWSIM) for more details.
- **"Damp" Cabins and Facilities:** If a pressurized water system is present (a well, water service connection, large water cistern, etc.) proceed to "Search for the Record" to verify that an authorized graywater disposal system is installed.
- **Offsite/Community Systems:**
  - Publicly Owned Treatment Works (City Utilities): Contact the local utility directly with rare exceptions.
  - Small Community / Common Collector Marine Outfall / Private Residential Marine Outfalls: Proceed to "Search for the Record" Also, check property covenants and easements for maintenance responsibilities for shared systems.

Search for the Record: STEP 1

To verify the system meets Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) standards, search the EDMS Map Explorer. Link is available at septic.alaska.gov.
Important Note: The EDMS Map Explorer is the primary source verification database.
Jurisdiction Exception: For most private residences, the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) and the City of Valdez (COV) manage their own systems. Contact them directly for records in those areas.

Search for the Record: STEP 2

EDMS Database Search Tips

- **Post-2020 Systems:** Easily searchable by legal description, map coordinates, address, or facility name.
- **Very Recent Installations:** Systems installed within the last 90 days. In fast-paced transactions, occasionally no information is available online until later. The qualified person or DEC should have copies of final documents.
- **Older Systems:** Search by the legal description at the time of construction. There may be no location on the map.
- **Keyword Strategy:** Keep it simple (e.g., search "Nancy Creek" instead of "Nancy Creek Estates Lot # Block #" or search "Tappan" instead of "Moose Range Meadows Tappan Replat")
- **Advanced Strategies:** Use a simple keyword search (e.g., Moose), navigate to the download tab (the down arrow to a rectangular box), and download a list of sites in an Excel spreadsheet to search via Excel. This technique works best for large subdivisions or common subdivision names.
- **Hard Copies & Fees:** If not online, your local DEC office may have hard copies. Alternatively, pay a fee to have DEC staff search for you (takes 5–10 working days). Request assistance to search at septic.alaska.gov

Understand & Evaluate the Record: STEP 1

If you find a record on EDMS, review the Permits and Documents tabs to identify its type:

Record Type	What It Means	Requirements
Registration	Standard, prescriptive system installed by a qualified professional.	Prior day notice and Documentation of Construction (DOC) within 90 days of installation.
Engineering Plan Review	Custom, site-specific design by a registered engineer.	Requires an "Approval to Construct" (valid for 24 months) and an "Approval to Operate."
	Waiver of prescriptive provisions.	Waiver of construction standard or separation distance and registration via DOC process.
Permitted Facility	Systems discharging to surface water, large commercial, or community systems.	Requires ongoing discharge monitoring.

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Continued: STEP 2

How to Evaluate the Document:

1. **Evaluate Record Type to the Requirements:** Verify the system has been registered/approved/permitted with the Department or at what stage it is at in the process. Add a note to your file if an additional step is needed. E.g., a qualified person submitted a 24-hour prior notice but must still submit the registration within 90 days of construction.
2. **Sizing:** Check if the documented bedroom count or commercial flow matches the current property use.
3. **Layout:** Verify that the physical layout and well separation distances match the record.
4. **Age of system:** Consider the age of the system when reviewing the documentation. Contact a qualified professional if you have questions regarding the age of the system.

Resolve Discrepancies or Missing Records

- **Property Has Changed** (e.g., adding bedrooms): Hire a registered engineer to assess if the system can handle the new load. Engineer submits this evaluation to the DEC for registration/approval of the changed use.
- **No Record Exists** (Undocumented System):
  - **Option A** (After-the-Fact Registration/Approval): Hire a registered engineer to inspect the system and register it or submit an approval to operate with DEC.
  - **Option B** (Modify/Replace): Hire a certified installer or registered engineer to modify or replace the system to meet current standards and register it with DEC.

Special Notice: Undocumented wastewater disposal systems pose a special hazard for current and future property owners. Without a record, it is nearly impossible to know exactly what was installed and whether it was installed properly. Only DEC registered documents or approvals meet State of Alaska requirements; verify with DEC staff when provided unregistered or unapproved documentation. For unapproved systems, option A or B must occur to bring the system into compliance.

Maintenance History: FINAL STEP

- Always ask the seller for professional pumping and maintenance records. For shared systems, check property covenant and easements for maintenance.

For more information visit septic.alaska.gov for examples of the current required documents. For further information please contact local office staff; visit "contact us" on the website. – This initiative was made possible through a grant provided by the National Association of REALTORS® Community Development Advocacy Program.

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