Questions and Answers Regarding Flood Affected Sewage Disposal Systems

Q: Can I use my sewage holding tank?

A: Your sewage holding tank should only be used if it's no longer immersed in groundwater.

Q: If my sewage disposal system was flooded, but does not require replacement, can I use it?

A: Yes, provided groundwater has receded to at least 4 feet below the level of the soil absorption component (e.g., absorption bed) of your sewage disposal system.

Q: How do I measure the level of groundwater below my sewage disposal system?

A: Existing clean-out and monitor pipes can be used as a guide. If there is water in these pipes, it may indicate that groundwater is still too high. If you can't tell from these pipes, dig a hole at least 20 feet away from your sewage disposal system to determine how high groundwater is in the area.

Q: What are my options if my sewage disposal system was damaged during the flood.

A: If your system was limited to a sewage holding tank, it can be repaired or replaced at any time.

If your system consisted of a septic tank and soil absorption system, repair or replacement may depend on how high groundwater is on your property. If it's still too high, you may have to wait. In the meantime, a septic tank can be installed and used as a holding tank until it can be determined if a soil absorption system can be installed. To do this, simply cap the outlet so that sewage cannot flow out of the tank.

Note: if you use your septic tank as a sewage holding tank, it is strongly recommended that you have a high level alarm installed.

Before you work on your sewage disposal system, consult with a Health Officer as a permit may be require for the work you plan to do.

For more information on sewage disposal systems, contact Environmental Health Services at:

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