



Buying or Selling a Place with a Septic System?

Iowa's [Time of Transfer Law](#) requires that every septic system serving a home or building be inspected prior to the sale of the property or deed transfer.

Why are these inspections required?

Iowa has an estimated 100,000 buildings with septic systems that do not function adequately. Some of the systems are very old and pipe raw sewage to a road ditch or field drain tile. Others may have secondary treatment such as a seepage (leach) field or sand filter, but are failing due to surfacing sewage. These substandard systems pollute the environment and pose a public health hazard. Both are illegal and require repair.

Does the Time of Transfer Law apply to homes or buildings served by public sewer?

No, only properties which use private septic systems for sewage treatment and disposal are included in the requirement.

Who can do the inspections? Time of transfer inspections must be conducted by an inspector who has completed training and been certified by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. A list of Certified Time of Transfer Inspectors can be found at http://www.iowadnr.gov/Portals/idnr/uploads/water/septic/tot_list.pdf. For a

list of local inspectors, contact the Scott County Health Department.

Who can request an inspection?

Buyers, sellers, lending institutions, and real estate agents all can request one.

Should the septic tank be pumped prior to the inspection? DO NOT have the tank pumped until after the inspection. Doing so will delay the inspection.

What is included in the inspection?

Time of transfer inspections include a search of septic records and an onsite inspection of the system, including the septic tank, distribution box, and seepage field or sand filter. The inspector sends a report on the condition of the existing sewage system to the person who requested it and the Scott County Health Department.

Can the inspection be done if the house or building is vacant? Yes, however there are certain preparations that must be done before the inspection.

Can these inspections be done at any time during the year? There are provisions in the law that cover situations where inspections may be delayed due to weather conditions.

What if the system is working, but it is old and not up to code? The purpose of the law is to eliminate systems that are

failing and/or discharging untreated sewage. If the system has secondary treatment AND is working, it does not have to be upgraded to meet today's code.

What happens if the septic system does not pass inspection? A failing system does not prevent the sale of property; however Scott County code requires repair or replacement of a failing system.

Are there any exceptions to the requirement for time of transfer inspections? There are a few situations where an inspection may not be required. See Time of Transfer Exemptions at http://www.iowadnr.gov/Portals/idnr/uploads/water/septic/files/tot_exempt.pdf.



For more information regarding Iowa's Time of Transfer Law, please call the Scott County Health Department at 563-326-8618.

Hazards in the House

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a silent killer. It is a colorless, odorless, and poisonous gas that causes illness or death. It is harmful when breathed because it robs the brain, the heart, and other vital organs of oxygen. Symptoms include drowsiness, headache, and confusion. Severe exposures can cause unconsciousness and cardiac/respiratory failure. Do not use a stove or oven to heat your home. Do not burn charcoal indoors. Do not leave a gas powered motor running in the garage even with the door open. Install a CO detector. Go outside for fresh air immediately if you suspect CO poisoning.

Lead paint in older homes can poison. Chipping and peeling lead-based paint is especially hazardous to young children who often put their fingers in their mouths. Have your children tested annually up to age 6. Lead poisoning has been associated with lower I.Q.s, behavior problems, and slower development. Be careful when doing renovations if you have an older home. Adults have become poisoned when disturbing surfaces containing lead paint during remodeling projects.

Radon exposure is the leading cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers and the second leading cause in smokers. Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that escapes from the earth and collects inside buildings by seeping in through cracks and holes in basements and foundations. Radon levels in Iowa are among the highest in the nation. Test your home with a radon kit available at many hardware and home improvement stores. Follow the instructions. If levels are high, have a radon reduction system installed by a qualified contractor.

Related Resources:

Iowa Department of Natural Resources - <http://www.iowadnr.gov/InsideDNR/RegulatoryWater/PrivateSepticSystems/TimeofTransfer.aspx>

Iowa Department of Public Health -

http://www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/common/pdf/healthy_homes/healthy_homes_brochure.pdf

http://www.idph.state.ia.us/eh/carbon_monoxide.asp

<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/LPP/WhatIsLeadPoisoning.aspx>

<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/Radon/>

Quad Cities Builders & Remodelers Association Home Show, February 6, 7 & 8, 2015:

<http://www.qcbr.org/HomeShow.php>

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

- National Wear Red Day for Women's Heart Health: February 6, 2015: <https://www.goredforwomen.org/home/get-involved/national-wear-red-day/>
- Scott County Board of Health Meeting, Scott County Administrative Center, 1st Floor Boardroom, 12:00 PM Thursday, February 19, 2015.

OUR MISSION:

The Scott County Health Department promotes, protects, and preserves health through leadership, services, education, and partnerships.

OUR VISION:

Scott County— A safe and healthy community.

SCOTT COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Scott County Administrative Center, 4th Floor

600 West 4th Street

Davenport, Iowa 52801-1030

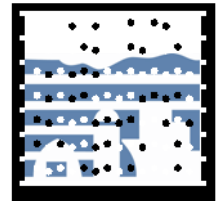
Phone: 563-326-8618

Fax: 563-326-8774

E-mail: health@scottcountyiowa.com

Web site: www.scottcountyiowa.com/health

Facebook: www.facebook.com/scottcountyiowa



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