

Septic Tank Pump-Out Program To Be Implemented

By now, you may have received correspondence from the Town of Smithfield which contains a survey about potential septic systems on your property. This is due to the Town of Smithfield's implementation of a Septic Tank Pump-Out Program under mandate of the Virginia Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area Act; Isle of Wight County is under the same mandate, and their Smithfield Election District will be implemented in concert with the Town. This program aims to preserve and enhance the quality of Chesapeake Bay waters by requiring routine pump-outs of on-site septic systems (Every five years).

Septic systems that are overloaded with solids, leaking, flooded or otherwise impaired are known to contribute pollutants to the ground and surface waters that discharge into the Bay. The new Septic Tank Pump-Out Program is intended to promote routine maintenance and to extend the life of on-site septic systems, which is of benefit to the Bay, as well as the homeowner. In 2008 the estimated cost of a septic tank pump-out ranged from \$250 to \$350. Be aware, however; that the arranging of the pump-outs and all costs associated with the pump-outs are the responsibility of the property owner.

Key points of the Septic Tank Pump-Out Program are as follows:

- It applies only to those properties that contain on-site septic systems and are located within the Town of Smithfield and / or the Smithfield Election District of Isle of Wight County. (If you are on Town sewer, this does not affect you.)
- The program will be implemented in September 2008.
- Once notified by the Town to register affected septic systems, property owners will have two years to have the septic tank pump-outs performed or to provide documentation to the Town which reflects that a pump-out has been performed within the last five years.

To establish a database for running this program, property owners are required to fill out the enclosed Registration and Compliance form. **Please note that the deadline for the return of the survey is October 22, 2008.** Kindly return your completed form to the Department of Planning, Engineering and Public Works by the deadline date.

We anticipate that there are many questions and some fears associated with the implementation of this program. Therefore, **an educational public meeting will be held at the Smithfield Center on Wednesday, October 8 at 7:00pm** to explain the need and purpose for the program, outline the specifics, and to answer questions from the general public. We encourage you to attend this meeting if you have any questions or would like to learn more about the program.

If you have any questions in the meantime, Joseph Reish, Planning Technician for the Town of Smithfield is available weekdays between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. to answer your questions. He can be reached at 757-365-4271.

Additional information about private, on-site septic systems and septic tank pump-outs can also be obtained from the Environmental Protection Agency's website at: http://www.epa.gov/npdes/pubs/homeowner_guide_long_customize.pdf