

Utah County Health Department
Wastewater Policy for Percolation Tests and Soil Profile Evaluations
January 25, 2006

The purpose of performing percolation tests, soil profile evaluations, and soil texture analysis is to assess soil suitability for onsite wastewater systems. Cold temperatures and precipitation (ground freeze, soil saturation, etc.) can and does lead to inaccurate results. As a result of performing percolation tests when conditions are not suitable, onsite wastewater systems may end up being oversized or sites may even be rejected. Therefore the Utah County Health Department adopts the following policy:

1. All percolation tests and soil profile holes are to be evaluated by staff from the office of Environmental Health.
2. At a minimum, a percolation test and soil profile evaluation must be conducted on every lot where an onsite wastewater system is to be installed regardless as to what type of system is going to be installed. In addition a soil texture analysis will be performed on soils for all deep trench systems.
3. The percolation test will be conducted at the approximate depth and location where the proposed onsite system is to be installed.
4. An application must be completed, a preliminary plot plan must be received, instructions for percolation tests and soil profile evaluations given to the applicant before an appointment can be made to perform the necessary evaluations.
5. Appointments for percolation tests and soil profile evaluations must be made at least one business day prior to the percolation test and soil profile evaluation.
6. Percolation tests will not be conducted from December 1st through the end of February. In addition, percolation tests will not be performed during any cold weather period unless the ambient air temperature is above 40 degrees Fahrenheit both day and night for a minimum of 48 hours.
7. Percolation tests will not be performed at anytime when the ground around the percolation test hole is saturated from factors other than the percolation test itself.
8. Soil profile holes may be evaluated during cold weather periods provided our office receives sufficient notification so as to be able to have a staff member on site as the hole is being excavated. Soil profile evaluations without a percolation test will need to be followed-up with a percolation test when the conditions are suitable as described in this policy. An additional fee as prescribed in the Utah County fee schedule will be assessed for the follow-up percolation test.
9. If there is a discrepancy between the results of the soil texture analysis and the percolation test, the onsite wastewater system will be sized according to those results that would require the larger system. Follow-up testing may be performed to settle the discrepancy as well.