

Sewerage System Regulation

Moving Forward

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Goals for Today

- Provide Background.
- Identify UBCM concerns.
- Identify other stakeholder concerns and hear their perspectives (i.e. those on panel).
- Get Local Government Input on Issues and strategies for solution.

Sewerage System Regulation (2004)

- Move from government oversight model to industry responsibility was a big change.
- Health Protection Branch is currently reviewing concerns of various stakeholders regarding the regulation.
- Perceived issues may take several years to confirm.
- Regardless, if they are concern to public & stakeholders, they need addressing.

What changed?

- Education is now required for those installing systems.
- Permit process was replaced with a filing process which no longer required inspections, eliminating wait times.
- Overall move from model of government oversight to industry responsibility.
- Standards were made more comprehensive to deal with a wider variety of situations not considered under the old regulation.
- Operation and maintenance requirements were introduced to promote proper long term functioning of systems.

Concerns from UBCM Working Group

Five General Categories:

1. Increased Cost to Homeowners
2. Flexibility in alternatives for system installations
3. Inadequate qualified persons
4. Communication
5. Liability

Concerns from UBCM Working Group

Seventeen Points:

- Homeowner Warranty
- Industry Liability
- Paper Audit
- Onsite Audit
- Life Cycle Analysis
- Subdivision Regulation Amendments
- Subdivision Regulation Model Bylaw
- Governance Options

Concerns from UBCM Working Group

- Revised SPM
- Flexibility
- Regulatory Amendments
- Service provision
- Education and training
- Practitioner Brochures
- BCOSSA Outreach
- Public Confidence
- Communications

Other Stakeholder Concerns

- No proactive review process
 - improper design and/or construction of systems may be missed
 - Fear of premature failure & resulting health hazard.
- Investigation of illegal systems:
 - Construction without filing
 - Construction by non-qualified persons
- Standard Practice Manual, which guides designs and installation of systems, is complex and may be open to misinterpretation.

Forum for Discussion on Outstanding Issues

- Key issues have been discussed within the Ministry and at the Sewerage System Leadership Counsel (SSLC), and options for solutions have been suggested for consideration.
- The SSLC is composed of:
 - Ministry of Health
 - Health Authorities
 - BCOSSA
 - ASTTBC
 - APEGBC
 - Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors
 - Union of BC Municipalities

Costs

- There is a perception that the regulation has led to increased costs imposed by installers
- Cost of construction has risen significantly in the province over the past several years, and sewage systems have too.
- Some regions of the province have limited access to authorized persons, leading to concerns over monopolies.
- Some stakeholders think homeowners should still be allowed to install systems themselves.
- New regulation permits high technology solutions that allow for the development of properties that were undevelopable under the old regulation. These, however, come at a much higher cost.

Costs – Strategies

BCOSSA is working to increase number of authorized persons in remote areas. Currently 463 ROWPs in BC

If PEng. designs and supervises system installation then the installer does not currently require certification.

Standard Practice Manual has been modified to allow use of lower cost solutions.

Communication

There appears to be some confusion as to how the new regulation works, and basic knowledge of septic system function, and alternatives

Standard Practice Manual, which guides designs and installation of systems, is complex and may be open to misinterpretation

Communication: What strategies have been suggested?

An improved MOH website could help:

- explain how the new regulation works, and basic knowledge of septic system function, and alternatives
- Explain why costs can vary from site to site.
- Create links with local governments and other stakeholders
- Industry has produced educational pamphlets which are currently being distributed to help educate the public and other stakeholders.
- UBCM/MOH communications campaign aimed at addressing SSR concerns

Liability: What strategies have been suggested?

Proactive Review Options:

- Implement a review process of filings submitted by installers, which may be comprehensive, random, or targeted.
- Could be done by another agency.
- Set critical public health standards that can be flagged during review.
- Introduce authority to intervene where critical standards are not met before or during construction.
- Refer poor design & installation practices to registering bodies for discipline.

Illegal Systems: What strategies have been suggested?

- Illegal systems (i.e. those installed without filing, or by unauthorized persons).
 - Promote reporting of illegal activity to health authorities for investigation.
 - Cross reference building permit process to filing process.
 - Disclosure upon sale of property
 - Inform Mortgage/lending agencies
 - Register systems on title.
 - Independent Third Party mandated to investigate illegal systems
 - Regulate Sale of Equipment

What happens Next?

- Policy being developed for consideration by government
- Often require seeking consensus of stakeholders with opposing interests.
- May be achieved through small incremental changes.

Questions?

Feedback?