

The Sewerage System Regulation and Municipal Wastewater Regulation: Jurisdictional Flow Divide for Onsite Sewerage Systems

The Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Environment and Parks have jointly developed this guidance document to clarify the meaning of section 2 of the Sewerage System Regulation (SSR) and section 4 of the Municipal Wastewater Regulation (MWR). These sections describe the dividing line between the SSR and MWR. This guidance document can be used by authorized persons when determining which regulation applies to the design and installation of an onsite sewerage system.

Context

The [Sewerage System Regulation](#) (SSR), under the [Public Health Act](#) regulates sewerage systems that discharge to ground and are designed to receive a sewage flow of less than 22,700 litres per day (5000 Imperial gallons). Regional health authorities accept filings with respect to these types of sewerage system.

The [Municipal Wastewater Regulation](#) (MWR), under the [Environmental Management Act](#) regulates wastewater treatment systems with a maximum daily flow that is equal to or exceeds 22.7 m³/day (equivalent to 22,700 litres per day) to ground, or discharge any volume to water. The [Ministry of Environment and Parks](#) issues authorizations with respect to these types of sewage systems.

Responsibilities of Authorized Persons

It is the responsibility of the professional of record to determine –with consideration of [Engineers and Geoscientists BC's Code of Ethics](#), and [Professional Practice Guidelines and Advisories](#) – what the cumulative impacts of multiple systems may be, and whether the construction of multiple systems is protective of the environment and public health. Professionals should specifically consider Principle 1 of the Code of Ethics as well as the Engineers and Geoscientists BC's [Professional Practice Guideline for Onsite Sewerage Systems](#). Professionals are also responsible for documenting a rationale for their decision-making and retaining records of project documentation in accordance with [Engineers and Geoscientists BC's Quality Management Guides](#).

[Section 2.1 of the SSR](#) prescribes health hazards related to the discharge of domestic sewage or effluent. [Section 15 of the Public Health Act](#) requires that a person not cause a health hazard. Sewerage systems which are adjacent but not physically connected may have discharge areas where combined hydraulic loading to the land is significant and may lead to the development of a health hazard.

Guidance

When a filing submitted to health authorities is near the flow threshold of the SSR or when multiple filings for adjacent systems are submitted to health authorities, the Environmental Health Officer may refer the file(s) to the Ministry of Environment and Parks' authorization officers for review, and vice versa.

Within the Sewerage System Regulation:

- SSR section 2(b) provides that a sewerage system serving one single family residence or duplex falls under the SSR regardless of design daily flow.
- A combination of sewerage systems falls under the SSR sections 2(c), 2(d), if the design daily flow from all the combined systems is less than 22,700 L/day. For example: two septic tanks serving multiple structures, but all tanks connected to a single dispersal field. Cumulative impact of multiple systems in an area should also be considered.

Within the Municipal Wastewater Regulation:

Those systems not captured by the SSR should fall under either the MWR or the *Environmental Management Act*, including:

- Any system where the treatment works are not physically connected to the source of the sewage, and
- All combined systems with maximum daily flow that is equal to or exceeds 22.7 m³/day (equivalent to 22,700 litres per day) are captured under the Municipal Wastewater Regulation.

Questions regarding this jurisdictional flow interpretation guideline should be directed to the following contacts:

Sewerage System Regulation Ministry of Health	Municipal Wastewater Regulation Ministry of Environment and Parks
Health Protection Branch 4th Floor – 1515 Blanshard Street, Victoria Tel: 250 419-8611 HP-PHW@gov.bc.ca	Environmental Policy and Initiatives Branch 3rd Floor – 525 Superior Street, Victoria Tel: 236 478-0896 ENV.Mail@gov.bc.ca