



GRAHAM COUNTY

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Health (928) 428-1962

826 West Main Street, Safford, Arizona 85546

FAX (928) 428-8074

Septic System Repairs: Guidelines and Limitations

Repairs done to maintain an existing septic system, or to extend the life of the system, are considered routine maintenance. However, a repair review must be performed by the health department to ensure that the planned work does not go beyond what is acceptable under R18-9-A309(A)(9), which governs septic repairs in the state of Arizona. Some examples of repairs include:

- Leach line replacement due to root invasion or collapsed lines.
- Repair of a broken or cracked septic tank, distribution box, or valve.
- Repair of erosion or damage from previous flooding in the drainfield area.
- Replacement of compromised aggregate due to various issues.

Some examples of work that do **not** qualify as repairs include:

- Modifying or replacing a system built prior to 2001 with a different type of system, or changing from a gravity fed system to one requiring a pump (or other powered equipment) for treatment or disposal, or changing to a different Type 4 system after the original authorization.
- Extending the disposal works more than ten feet beyond the original footprint.
- Reconstructing any part of the disposal works in a soil that is inadequate for the treated wastewater flow or strength, or reconstructing the disposal works in violation of the vertical separation requirements in R18-9-A312(E).
- Expanding the footprint of the house or building beyond setback requirements established in R18-9-A312(C).
- Modifying the treatment works or disposal works to accommodate a daily design flow or waste load greater than was originally approved, or replacing the treatment works (tank).
- Adding additional drainfield or a larger tank due to the addition of bedrooms, bathrooms, and/or plumbing fixtures after the original septic system installation.

The department will review your Repair Review Application to ensure the planned work meets the definition of a repair. If it exceeds what is acceptable as a repair, the application will be denied, and a Notice of Intent to Discharge (septic system application) will need to be submitted for a new or replacement system.

In some cases, problems with a septic system are a result of too much water being fed into the system. For example, a leaking toilet may cause a drainfield to become over-saturated. Or additional people staying in the home may generate more wastewater than the system was designed to handle. In these cases, the problem doesn't lie with the septic system, but rather with household plumbing or additional water usage. The reason why an onsite septic system is not operating properly must be carefully examined before deciding what type of repair or replacement is needed, if one is needed at all.