

# **On-Site Rule Revision Issue: Increase Septic Tank Sizing When Low-Flow Fixtures Are Used**

(Sewage tanks #3 of 3)

## **1. Issue (WAC 246-272A-0232)**

Currently the rule does not address this issue. This could be an opportunity to address this issue.

## **2. Problem statement**

Some think the proportionate lower volume of liquid could cause problems by adding a disproportionate amount of solids with potentially less retention time, and therefore leading to inadequate digestion of solids (the ratio of solids to liquid is higher). This could add to more inadequate primary treatment in the septic tank. This idea probably could occur more frequently in smaller, non-residential OSS. However, single-family residential (SFR) OSS comprise the vast majority of OSS. Typical SFR use includes relatively large volumes of water use in laundry and baths/showers. This use of water minimizes the concern affected by the use of the other low-flow fixtures.

## **3. Supporting Research/Evidence**

DOH could not find any supporting documentation relating to this concern for typical SFR OSS usage.

## **4. Options**

- A. Add specific language to this section to address the increase in septic tank sizing for this issue. This would require research.
- B. Do not change the current rule requirement regarding this issue.
- C. Take this opportunity to require an increase in the frequency of monitoring when this issue does create a concern.

## **5. PROs/CONs**

### **PROs:**

- It adds language to address a concern.
- A bigger septic tank allows for more retention time and therefore more settling and digestion of the solids.
- A bigger septic tank could lead to the need for less frequent pumping.

### **CONs:**

- The concern seems minimal for the vast majority of OSS in WA.
- The idea in general could give a false sense of security, therefore potentially taking the place of proper routine monitoring.

## **6. Recommendation**

We recommend that no added language occur on this topic.

