



## Memorandum

**TO:** Missoula City-County Board of Health  
**FROM:** Shannon Therriault, R.S.  
**DATE:** February 8, 2010  
**RE:** Modifying the Septic Application Fee

The Department requests that the Board separate the Septic Permit Application Fee into two fees, an application fee and a permit fee. The overall fees wouldn't change. Instead, this division would allow us to collect part of the fees at the beginning of the process to cover the Department's costs for writing septic permits.

Once a septic permit application is submitted, a sanitarian reviews the information, researches what is necessary to write the permit, calls the applicant if more information is needed, completes the permit and then calls the applicant telling them the permit is ready to be picked up. For a number of reasons, we collect the fees (even though technically it is an application fee) when the permit is issued, rather than when the application is first submitted. The primary reason is that we often don't know what type of system will be installed (and therefore how much the permit will be) when the application is first submitted. In addition, other fees, such as non-degradation review or pressure system sizing are often, but not always, necessary. Finally, there is the assumption that once all the fees are paid, the permit has been issued, and permission to construct has been granted.

The Health Code states that the application fee is non-refundable. This is appropriate for the portion of the fee that covers the amount of time staff spends on researching and writing the permit. However the rest of the fee, which covers things like the inspection, enforcement and data entry, is not "spent" if a permit is never issued.

Updating the 2006 in-depth analysis of how much it costs us per septic permit, we recommend an application fee of \$100. The balance of the fee (for example, \$145 for a basic permit or \$200 for a pressure permit) would be collected when the permit is issued.

(See other side for more information)

<b>Septic Program Activity</b>	<b>Work done by:</b>	<b>Unit</b>	<b>Cost per Unit</b>	<b>Units per permit</b>	<b>Cost per permit in 2009 \$</b>	<b>Cost for writing the permit</b>
Issuing Permits	Sanitarian	hour	\$55	1.5	82.50	82.50
Inspecting the system (including travel time)	Sanitarian	hour	\$55	1.5	82.50	
Admin/Data Entry	Admin	hour	\$27	.40	11.00	
Answering questions, setting appts	Sanitarian	hour	\$55	.25	13.75	6.50
Enforcement	Sanitarian	hour	\$55	.50	27.50	
Supervisors	Supervisor	hour	\$65	.25	16.50	
Rule/Form/Info/Data System updates	Sanitarian	hour	\$55	.20	11.00	11.00
<b>TOTAL</b>					244.75	<b>100.00</b>

Note: Administrative time includes answering phone calls, looking up permits, copying permits for inspections, scanning site plans and inspections, other data entry, tracking fees

#### Relevant Sections of the Missoula City-County Health Code

#### V. PERMITS AND APPLICATIONS.

(B) Permit Applications and Fees. The Department may not issue a permit, registration or conduct work for which a fee is set until the following requirements are satisfied:

- (1)The applicant furnishes the Department with necessary information required by the applicable regulation; and,
- (2)All required fees are paid. Application fees are non-refundable.

#### VIII. FEES

The Board may adopt fees that are fair and reasonable for permit applications, Department services, tests, or certifications established by this Code. Fees may be adopted or changed at any regularly scheduled meeting of the Board providing that the action is scheduled on the Board agenda and public comment allowed.