



County of San Diego

Department of Environmental Health

Land and Water Quality Division

www.sdcdeh.org

San Diego Office
5201 Ruffin Road, Suite C
San Diego, CA 92123
(858) 565-5173

San Marcos Office
151 E. Carmel Street
San Marcos, CA 92078
(760) 471-0730

RESERVOIR SETBACK POLICY

PURPOSE

To establish guidelines for the setback from onsite wastewater systems to domestic water supply reservoirs consistent with the guidelines set by the California Department of Public Health Drinking Water Program.

BACKGROUND

On September 1, 1967, policies and regulations for the protection of domestic water supply reservoirs were adopted for the County of San Diego consisting of restrictions on the location and use of onsite wastewater systems including a setback ranging from 500 to 1000 feet to the reservoir high water line. Since that time, improvements have been made in the design and review of onsite wastewater systems eliminating the need for such restrictive setbacks. In addition, the California Department of Public Health who has authority over domestic drinking water reservoirs developed setback guidelines that were less restrictive than our guidelines.

POLICY

Effective this date, where residential or commercial sewage disposal is by means of individual onsite wastewater systems in the vicinity of a domestic drinking water reservoir, the following is required.

- a) The onsite wastewater systems must be designed by a registered Civil Engineer, Geologist or Environmental Health Specialist on the basis of percolation tests conducted at the site. In addition, the systems shall meet the all criteria contained in the Regional Water Quality Control Board's basin plan and San Diego County Code of Regulatory Ordinances.
- b) An area shall be set aside for each onsite wastewater system design to allow for the replacement of the entire drainage/dispersal system design in the event the initial system fails to function. This 100% reserve area is required for all onsite wastewater system designs that are a part of new construction, remodeling, a change in usage that increases potential occupancy or daily sewage flow, subdivisions, boundary adjustments, or grading plan projects. Percolation tests with rates in excess of 60 minutes per inch shall be required to have multiple reserve field areas.

- c) The onsite wastewater system must be set back from the reservoir high water line at least 200 feet, and must be at least 10 feet above the high water line. Such system must be prohibited from the shoreline portion of the closed zone at the reservoir outlet.
- d) Plans for the onsite wastewater system must be submitted to the Department of Environmental Health for review and approval prior to construction.