

HARRISON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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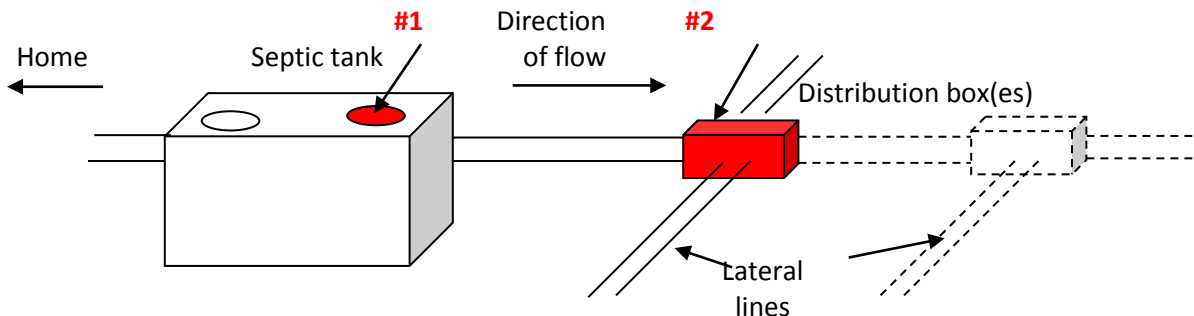
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PUTTING A NEW HOME ON AN EXISTING SEPTIC SYSTEM

Depending on the size of your existing septic system, its condition, the size of your new home, and perhaps other factors, we may issue you a 90-day conditional, or we may issue a septic repair permit to upgrade/replace your existing system. But we can do nothing until we can determine the age of your system, find a drawing of it, or until parts (shown below in red) are uncovered for visual inspection.

If your septic system is 10 or MORE years old:

- **Uncover the manhole cover** on the outgoing end of the septic tank (#1 on drawing). There is a baffle in the septic tank which prevents solids (toilet paper, grease, etc.) from flowing out of the tank and clogging up your lateral lines. We need to check the baffle to make sure it is in good condition. If it's not, it is not an expensive fix.
- **Uncover and remove the distribution box (D-box) lid** (#2 on drawing). Distribution boxes can deteriorate over time from use of detergents, bleach and other household chemicals. If this happens, wet spots can develop in the yard because the waste water is not being distributed to your lateral field evenly.



If your septic system is LESS THAN 10 YEARS OLD, you do not need to uncover any portions of it.

Septic permit records at the Harrison County Health Department date back to 1975. If your system is older than that, we won't have a record of it.

If we have a record and drawing of the existing system, it is usually a simple matter to locate the septic tank and distribution box (D-box).

If the system pre-dates our records (1975 or older), it may be more difficult. Generally, the septic tank is located about 10 to 15 feet from the house, but can be more or less. It is usually buried 1 to 2 feet beneath the surface. It is about 10' long, 5' wide, and 5' deep. The distribution-box is generally located 5 to 10 feet from the far end of the septic tank, but can be more or less. It is smaller – about 2' long, 1' wide, and 1' deep. It is also buried 1 to 2 feet beneath the surface. If you don't want to search yourself, some septic pumpers are adept at locating older systems. We can give you names and numbers of those, if needed.

Please note that if your home was built in the 1970's, they thought deeper was better. We have seen some tanks and/or D-boxes dating from that time buried 4 feet below the surface! Also, prior to 1990, most systems had more than one D-box installed in a series running downgrade – just uncover the first one.

When you have these items uncovered, call 812-738-3237. Environmental Health personnel will schedule a time to look at and evaluate the system. If you have any other questions, give us a call. We will be happy to clarify any information that is unclear.