

**SEWAGE FACILITIES ACT 537 OFFICIAL PLAN UPDATE
SEWAGE DISPOSAL NEEDS IDENTIFICATION SURVEY INFORMATION
FOR
EAST FALLOWFIELD TOWNSHIP, CHESTER COUNTY, PA**

Act 537, the Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act, requires that all municipalities develop, revise, and implement Official Sewage Facility Plans ("Act 537 Plan" or simply "Official Plan"). A fundamental part of this Act 537 Plan is the identification and documentation of the sewage disposal needs in a municipality. In order to identify and document the sewage disposal needs within the Study Area of the Act 537 Official Plan Update for East Fallowfield Township, a Sewage Disposal Needs Identification Survey is being conducted in accordance with the PA DEP Guidelines for *Act 537 Sewage Disposal Needs Identification*. The purpose of this survey is to clearly identify and document existing wastewater disposal needs and to summarize and present the identified needs for evaluation of alternatives for safe wastewater disposal from a public health and environmental standpoint.

In an effort to accurately define and document suspected problem areas, and to prioritize the severity of any problem areas, this survey is being conducted in two "Tiers:"

Tier One: A questionnaire (mail-in) survey was prepared and sent to property owners with on-lot disposal systems (OLDS), which requested the resident to complete and return the survey; and

Tier Two: Visual surveys are to be conducted on a random sample of properties, which were chosen from completed mail-in surveys. **According to the DEP guidance document, "to validate the mail-in survey results, a certain percentage of returned questionnaires, selected at random, must be field-verified. The percentage of field-verified questionnaires required to validate a survey will vary with the total size of the survey."** The visual surveys of OLDS are to be conducted to achieve this objective.

Tier One of the survey has been completed and Tier Two has commenced. In order to avoid having to make repeated site visits and to avoid the cost to the Township of having to conduct a **door-to-door survey**, forms are being sent to a random sample of those residents with OLDS who responded to Tier One of the survey in an effort to gain right-of-entry prior to visiting their property. This is being done as a courtesy to the property owner, so that they may be present during the survey if they so choose, as well as to most efficiently and cost effectively complete the survey and ultimately the Act 537 Official Plan Update.

Again, the purpose of this survey is to clearly identify and document existing wastewater disposal needs and to summarize and present the identified needs for evaluation of alternatives for safe wastewater disposal from a public health and environmental standpoint. This is simply information gathering ONLY. It is NOT an inspection of the OLDS.

The Visual Survey request includes a letter explaining the process and a permission form granting access to their property, which is to be signed and returned to the Township in the self-addressed postage paid envelope provided, if the property owner decides to grant permission. Some permission forms were mailed in the beginning of June 2015, and were requested to be returned within seven days of their receipt. Additional forms are being sent because the required minimum percentage response was not achieved. Although a seven day response time is requested, this is in an effort to solicit expeditious responses. Permission forms will be accepted beyond the seven day timeframe. Visual Surveys will not be conducted prior to receipt of a signed permission form and/or contacting the property owner to advise when the survey would take place, if requested. During the Visual Survey, responses to the questionnaire (Tier One) survey that the property owner previously completed will be verified. In addition, at the time of the Visual Survey, more detailed information will be gathered, if necessary.

Finally, the data obtained from the survey, in addition to an assessment of various other public health and environmental factors relating to soils, reported sewage malfunctions, polluted wells, zoning, property size, etc., will be summarized and presented as part of the Act 537 Official Plan Update in order to identify and evaluate appropriate sewage disposal alternatives and solutions.