

**NEW CASTLE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF SPECIAL SERVICES
SEWER CAPACITY GROUP
POLICY**

Policy No.: 6

Subject: Available Capacity Determinations
General Policy and Exceptions for Grinder Pump

Revised Date: October 6, 2003

Effective Date: October 6, 2003

POLICY

The primary method of sanitary sewer disposal within New Castle County is the use of gravity flow sewers. A secondary method that is permitted by the State of Delaware and the Department of Natural Resources is septic systems. Septics continue to be permitted by State law as safe and reasonable sewage disposal systems; therefore, a presumption of properly-permitted septics, and replacement septics as appropriate sewage disposal shall be taken by the Department of Special Services unless an application meets the exception criteria outlined below.

EXCEPTION: GRINDER PUMPS

A special exception to the general policy allowing connection to the County sanitary sewer system via grinder pumps may be approved by the General Manager at the request of the property owner. In such cases, the owner shall be required to purchase, operate, maintain, and replace the requested grinder pump at the owner's cost, in perpetuity. Under no circumstances shall New Castle County ever become responsible or liable for any costs associated with any grinder pump permitted under this policy exception.

POLICY DISCUSSION

New Castle County has operated its gravity flow sewer system since 1934. New Castle County currently operates the sewer system for all of the unincorporated properties of New Castle County and most of the incorporated areas of New Castle County. Septic systems are a secondary method of sewage disposal and treatment that are recognized and permitted by the State of Delaware through the Department of Natural Resources (DNREC). DNREC has determined that lawfully installed and properly maintained septic systems pose no threat to human health and the environment and are an acceptable means of sewage disposal/treatment.

The New Castle County Department of Special Services currently has an entire section dedicated to the maintenance and operation of 144 pump stations. Pump stations are mechanically operated and require electric power.

In those certain situations outlined below, the use of grinder pumps may be approved at the property owners' request and only upon the approval of the General Manager consistent with this policy. The operation, maintenance and replacement of the grinder pumps as well as the force mains approved as part of any grinder pump system shall be the responsibility of the owner(s) to clean, maintain, repair or replace to the point of connection with the County system. This responsibility shall run with this land.

In such cases, the Department shall approve the manufacturer and model for any such approved grinder pump and the property owner shall obtain a three (3) year warranty for any such grinder pump. Approval may be made under the following circumstances only:

I. Existing Structures:

When a septic system fails on a single lot, the primary remedy for that property owner shall be to replace the septic system. However, certain circumstances may exist at the site which would allow the use of grinder pumps as a feasible means of sewage disposal, as listed below:

- lot property line is located within 200' of existing sanitary sewer infrastructure as measured along a street right of way or/and appropriate utility easement or right of way as may be applicable and where sewer capacity exists;
- building or dwelling is located within 400' of existing sanitary sewer infrastructure as measured along a street right of way or/and appropriate utility easement or right of way as may be applicable and where sewer capacity exists;
- existing sanitary sewer infrastructure to which the property would connect is a common force main specifically designed for grinder pump connections and it is shown to be technically feasible by the property owner's consulting engineer for the property to connect to the common grinder pump force main;
- grinder pump is the only means in which to connect at the property elevations to the NCC gravity sewer system.

II. New Construction – Single Lots:

Grinder pumps may be allowed for new construction when the following criteria have been met:

- (1) a septic system has been shown to adversely affect natural environment conditions;
- (2) connection by gravity sewer is not technically feasible;

(3) number of potential connections do not exceed the scope of work defined as a record minor land development/subdivision plan;

(4) lot property line is located within 200' of existing sanitary sewer infrastructure as measured along a street right of way or/and appropriate utility easement or right of way as may be applicable and where sewer capacity exists;

(5) proposed building or dwelling is located within 400' of existing sanitary sewer infrastructure as measured along a street right of way or/and appropriate utility easement or right of way as may be applicable and where sewer capacity exists;

(6) existing sanitary sewer infrastructure to which the property would connect is a common force main specifically designed for grinder pump connections and it is shown to be technically feasible by the property owner's consulting engineer for the property to connect to the common grinder pump force main;

In no event shall the Department allow a larger development to be broken down into smaller single lots to obtain permission for grinder pumps "piecemeal" under this paragraph.


III. Application for Exception Consideration:

To request approval for use of grinder pumps, the owner or owner's representative shall submit a letter to the General Manager requesting that a grinder pump system be approved. Such request shall include a technical evaluation of the site, which eliminates the possibility of a gravity sewer connection and why a sewer connection is preferable to septic. If the General Manager approves a grinder pump system, consistent with this policy, he shall provide written approval of the system, subject to the Department's approval of the final system design. The grinder pump system must be warranted for a minimum period of three (3) years and confirmation of such must be submitted to the General Manager prior to final approval. Upon final approval, the Department shall notify the property owner, in writing, that it shall bear full responsibility for the maintenance, repair or replacement of any grinder pumps. Single user force mains approved as part of any grinder pump system shall be the responsibility of the owner to clean, maintain, and repair to the point of connection with the County system.

THE PROPERTY OWNER SHALL EXECUTE AN AGREEMENT WITH THE COUNTY IN WHICH IT SHALL ACKNOWLEDGE FULL ASSUMPTION OF ALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GRINDER PUMP SYSTEM ("AGREEMENT").

In addition, the property owner shall execute a Deed Restriction containing the terms of the Agreement and the property owner shall record the Deed Restriction and the Agreement in the Office of the Recorder of Deeds for New Castle County. The property owner shall provide the Department with proof of such recording and shall retain copies of the recorded documents.

LEGAL AUTHORITY: The New Castle County ("County") Department of Special Services ("Department") and the General Manager ("General Manager") of the Department enact this policy pursuant to authority granted to them in Title 9, Section 1341 (3) of the Delaware Code, 9 Del. C. § 1341 (3), and Chapter 2, Section 2.05.301 of the New Castle County Code ("Code"), 2 N.C.C.C. § 2.05.301.

Approved 
General Manager, Department of Special Services

Date: 10/6/03

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