

How the New Title 5 Effects Housing Additions and Other Changes of Use

Understanding the Code and Planning Your Renovation Project

If you are planning an addition or renovation to your home or commercial building served by a septic system, the project may be impacted by the requirements of the new Title V. Below are answers to the questions most frequently asked by homeowners considering additions and renovations.



1.) Is a Septic Inspection Required?

Any change in the footprint of the building will require an inspection to determine the location of the system components unless as built records are available. A title V on-site sewage disposal system inspection is required for any change in use of or expansion if a building permit is required AND the change of use will result in increased flow to the system.

2.) When are septic system upgrades required?

If your expansion or building addition will result in additional flow to the system, which was not planned for in the original septic installation, the septic system will need to be expanded or upgraded. For residential properties the number of bedrooms in the home calculates flow to the septic system. It is important to realize the term bedroom also includes a room that has the potential to be used as a bedroom by your family or another if the house is sold. For commercial property, square footage or the number of seats in a restaurant for example is used to calculate sewage flow.

3.) How do you determine the number of bedrooms?

The New Title V defines bedrooms and establishes a standard formula for determining the number of potential bedrooms in a home.

Bedroom - A room providing privacy, intended primarily for sleeping and consisting of all of the following:

- (a) Floor space of no less than 70 square feet;
- (b) For new construction, a ceiling height of no less than 7'3";
- (c) For existing houses and for mobile homes, a ceiling height of no less than 7'0";
- (d) An electrical service and ventilation; and

(e) At least one window

Living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, halls, bathrooms, unfinished cellars and unheated Storage areas over garages are not considered bedrooms. Single-family dwellings shall be Presumed to have at least three bedrooms.

Formula- Where the total number of rooms for single family dwellings exceeds eight, not including bathrooms, hallways, unfinished cellars and unheated storage areas, the number of bedrooms presumed shall be calculated by dividing the total number of rooms by two then rounding down to the next lowest whole number.

Deed Restriction- The applicant may design a system using design flows for a smaller number of bedrooms than are presumed in this definition by recording a deed restriction limiting the number of bedrooms to the smaller number and providing the Board of Health with documentation that the restriction was recorded with the Registry of Deeds.

4.) What are setback requirements?

Title V also regulates minimum setback requirements from the house/ addition foundation. These setback distances are as follows:

Minimum Setbacks

	Septic tank	Leach area
Foundation Wall	10	20
Slab Foundation	10	10