



October 26, 2015

### Onsite Wastewater Systems in Resort Villages and Organized Hamlets

On October 17, SOWMA provided a presentation on best practices for the operation and maintenance of onsite wastewater systems in resort villages and organized hamlets for the Provincial Association of Resort Communities of Saskatchewan (PARCS).

PARCS represents Resort Villages, Cottage Owners Associations, Organized Hamlets and Rural and Urban Municipalities. The organization was founded in 1983 as a working group recognizing the need for a collective voice for issues relating specifically to cottage communities in Saskatchewan.

One of their goals is to support and advocate environmental stewardship. Onsite wastewater management in the resort communities falls under that umbrella.

Most Resort Villages and Organized Hamlets in Saskatchewan operate with holding tanks rather than onsite wastewater systems. Under the Shoreline Pollution Control Regulation, a cottager wishing to install a conventional onsite wastewater system would require a significant setback of 1500 feet from the high water table.

During the course of the presentation and afterwards during a networking session the following questions were asked regarding onsite wastewater.

1. How do you decommission a septic tank?

a) An unused septic tank should be pumped out and then filled with a porous material, such as sand and/or gravel. The lid should then be secured so as to ensure it cannot be removed. Unused septic tanks should not be left open, or be left empty with an unsecured lid. Tanks should not be crushed and buried as they have effluent residue inside the tank.

2. Is it okay to have an outdoor shower without hooking it to the septic system?

a) This is an interesting question. Most travel trailers, campers and motorhomes now have outdoor showers and they are used for washing off prior to entering the vehicle. Outdoor showers that are allowed to run into the ground fall into the same category. It would be interesting to get some industry feedback on this topic.

3. Following fall pump outs, does it make sense to fill each tank up with water and measure the water over a 24 hour period to ensure the holding tank isn't leaking?

a) Tanks should be checked every year or two to ensure they are not cracked or damaged in some way. Filling them with water after the fall pump outs and then measuring any rate of fall would be one way to check if the tank is leaking, but then you have a full tank of water heading into the winter, or you need to get it pumped out again. Even though the tank was pumped prior to filling it with clean water, that water is now contaminated and should not just be pumped out onto the ground.

4. Can a Resort Village, Organized Hamlet or Rural Municipality create bylaws to address management of septage?

a) Yes, communities can implement sewage disposal bylaws under the authority of Public Health Act, 1994. Saskatchewan Health has sewage disposal model bylaws that Organized Hamlets and Rural Municipalities can use to adapt to their requirements. These bylaws might address unlawful pumping of graywater into the lake, mandatory annual inspections and maintenance, proof of regular pump-outs or other issues.

5. Can leaking septic tanks be repaired?

a) Yes leaking septic tanks can be repaired no matter whether they are manufactured from concrete, plastic or fibreglass depending upon the extent of the damage. Best practice would be to replace the tank as a repair may only be a stop gap measure.

Following the association's presentation, Kari Engele-Carter from Saskatoon Health Region made a presentation regarding the Private Sewage Works Regulation on behalf of the Ministry of Health.

## **CIPHI Trade Show**

SOWMA hosted a booth at the CIPHI Trade show held on September 28 & 29 in Regina, SK. AOWMA Secretary/Treasurer, Charles Hallett provided a presentation on New Technologies in the Onsite Wastewater Industry at the request of the SOWMA Board of Directors. Charles has worked in all disciplines of the onsite wastewater industry beginning his career as an Environmental Health Officer, moving to the private sector to design and install onsite wastewater systems and then onto the oil field to work as a Safety Officer. He was able to bring all these perspectives to the Health Officers present at the conference.

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## **Save The Date!**

The 2016 SOWMA Convention and Trade Show has been announced:

**March 11, 2016**  
**Saskatoon, SK**

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## **Onsite Wastewater Practitioner Training**

The next available training session dates are:

**Days 1 – 3 – October 28, 29 & 30, 2015 Regina, SK**

**Days 4 – 6 – November 16, 17 & 18, 2015 Regina, SK**

Registration for this training program is now open. For more information, please go online to <http://www.sowma.ca/training/> or contact the SOWMA office at 1-855-872-2650.

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## **Trench & Excavation: Competent Person Training**

United Rentals offers Competent Person Training seminars designed for all employees involved in trenching work, including job foremen, job superintendents, engineers and any personnel involved in underground projects.  
October 28 Saskatoon

More information is available on their website: [http://unitedacademy.ur.com/cart\\_builder.cfm?ProductID=47570](http://unitedacademy.ur.com/cart_builder.cfm?ProductID=47570)

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## **Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association Annual Convention**

The Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association Annual Convention will be held January 31 – February 3, 2016 in Regina, SK.

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## **Saskatchewan Association Of Rural Municipalities (SARM) Annual Convention & Trade Show**

Midterm Convention **November 5 & 6, 2015 Conexus Arts Centre – Regina, SK**

Annual Convention **March 7 -10, 2016 – Regina, SK**

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