



The Importance of a Detailed Site Evaluation

SOWMA

One of the common questions we get from homeowners is, "How much does a septic system cost?" That is difficult to say for sure, we tell them. First you need to have a site and soil evaluation performed to see what types of systems might work for your property. A detailed explanation of what characteristics are assessed in the soils profile entails, following which, the homeowner invariably says, "I already sent my soils samples to the lab."

When a homeowner says they have sent soils samples to the lab, we ask where they took the samples from? This question is usually answered with a random depth or the basic, 3, 5 and 8 feet. The next question we ask is, "why did you take the samples from those depths?" to which the response is typically dead silence.

What makes us think that if we have a problem soil in our soils profile, it will be at a prescribed depth like 3 feet or 5 feet? What if the problem soil is located at two and a half feet or four feet? Can we just ignore the problem in the soil profile because it doesn't appear at the prescribed depth?

Performing a detailed site evaluation will help to ensure that a problem soils horizon isn't missed because we didn't examine the soils profile closely enough to determine where our restricting and limiting layers are located.

Renovation of effluent requires seven days of retention or travel time in the soil. Different soils textures and structures impact how quickly or slowly the effluent will travel through the soil prior to re-entering the water table. The rate of travel is also impacted by coarse fragments, roots, and other items that create void spaces in the soil, like gopher holes.

Prior to selecting a loading rate and sizing the system, performing a detailed site evaluation will ensure that all factors that will impact the soils treatment component (field or mound) of the septic system are taken into consideration.

Texture alone should not be used to determine a loading rate. A good texture can be negatively impacted by a poor structure, while a poor texture can be positively impacted by a strong structure. If texture is the only parameter used to determine the loading rate, there is a potential for constructing a system that is much smaller than it should be or larger than it has to be.

The Saskatchewan Onsite Wastewater Disposal Guide provides the criteria for a detailed site evaluation in Section 4 on page IV-5. While the information in the Guide prescribes soils depths for sampling, be aware that the Guide is a minimum standard. Best practice should prevail. Taking samples from the restricting layer and limiting (design) layer will provide more accurate information on the capability of the soil to treat and disperse the effluent.

At the end of the day, performing a detailed site evaluation provides the information needed to design and install an onsite wastewater system that protects and serves the homeowner for many years to come, while protecting our precious groundwater resources. That's a win for everyone.

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Stay in-touch on industry news, learn about our latest training sessions, and check out photos of some of our events all on the SOWMA Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SaskatchewanOnsiteWastewaterManagementAssociation>



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Member Benefits: ServiceCore

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SOWMA is please to introduce a new benefit to our members!

ServiceCore is a Colorado-based company that provides software built exclusively for septic, portables and grease companies. Their software can help you save time and maximize your profit so you can spend more time with family and friends. The software has assisted business owners nationwide in streamlining their operations. It's easy to use and you can manage your accounts directly from any desktop computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone.

More information is available in your membership package, or by contacting our office.

Upcoming Industry Events

You can keep up-to-date on industry events on our events page: <http://www.sowma.ca/calendar/>

The SOWMA events page has recently been updated and features a calendar configuration, making it easier than ever to see what industry events are just around the corner.

Have an industry event you'd like to see posted? Feel free to contact us: <http://www.sowma.ca/contact/>

WEQ Fair

October 17-18, 2017
Nashville, Tennessee

NOWRA/NAWT Onsite Wastewater Mega Conference

October 22 – 25, 2017
Delaware

Ontario Water Innovation Week (ONWIN)

October 30-November 3, 2017
Ontario

World Toilet Day

November 19, 2017

WWETT Show 2018

Feb 21-24, 2017
Indianapolis, IN

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