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## **Grinder Pump & Greywater Systems Policy – May 2016**

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### **1.0 BACKGROUND**

Oxford County (the “County”) is responsible for municipally owned water and wastewater services for communities within the County. Typically, municipal wastewater collection systems have consisted of gravity sewers connected to a local wastewater treatment facility. In some communities, topography and other servicing challenges has required the installation of alternative collection systems such as low-pressure sewers with grinder pumps or variable grade greywater sewers with septic tank effluent gravity (STEG) or septic tank effluent pumped (STEP) tanks.

This policy is intended to detail the County and property owner (the “Owner”) responsibilities in order to ensure the standardization of infrastructure and to attempt to minimize the impact of this alternative servicing method on individual Owners.

### **2.0 APPROVED GRINDER PUMP & SEPTIC TANK PACKAGES**

The County is solely responsible for specifying the make and model of grinder pump, STEG or STEP packages acceptable for use in Oxford County municipal systems. Makes and models other than those approved by the County are not allowed to be used within County municipal systems and shall not be eligible for this policy, including the County maintenance and replacement program described below.

A grinder pump package is defined as the sewage pump, housing chamber, and associated mechanical and electrical appurtenances.

A STEG package is defined as the septic tank, effluent filter and associated pipe connections.

A STEP package is defined as the septic tank, sewage pump & chamber, effluent filter, pipe connections, associated mechanical and electrical appurtenances.

### **3.0 APPROVED INSTALLERS**

The County shall provide periodic training at no charge to contractors in the proper installation of the grinder pump and STEG/STEP packages. Upon the contractor’s completion of the training, the contractors will be placed on an approved installers list that will be maintained by County staff. The County reserves the right to remove installers from the approved list at its sole discretion. All packages must be installed by an approved installer.

### **4.0 SERVICING SCENARIOS**

This policy covers the following four scenarios:

- The Owner is required to install a grinder pump as part of County servicing project and has the installation completed by an approved installer.
- The Owner is required to install a grinder pump as part of the County servicing project and does not have the unit installed by an approved installer.

- The Owner does not require a grinder pump but wishes to install a unit for ease of servicing and wishes to enter into an agreement with the County for maintenance of the unit.
- The Owner is required to install a STEG/STEP system, as part of a County servicing project.

Owners under each scenario will be treated differently as specified in the sections below.

#### **4.1 Grinder Pump Installations as part of a servicing project by approved installer**

##### New Installations

- (a) The Owner is responsible for the costs associated with the installation of the unit and the connection to existing private plumbing and the curb stop at property line.
- (b) All work on private property shall be in compliance with the requirements of the Area Municipality's Building Department and the Ontario Building Code.
- (c) Any upgrade to the property's electrical system required to accommodate the grinder pump will be sole responsibility of the Owner.
- (d) The County strongly recommends that electrical wiring of the unit be conducted by a licensed electrician. Owners who complete their own wiring must have it inspected by the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) for compliance with the Electrical Safety Act.
- (e) Following installation, the grinder pump package is under the full ownership of, and is the responsibility of, the Owner.
- (f) The Owner is responsible for the decommissioning of existing private sanitary disposal systems in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Public Health and Emergency Services.
- (g) The Owner is responsible for ongoing electricity costs for pump operation.
- (h) The grinder pump will be provided by the County and delivered to the property. The cost of the County providing the grinder pump package will be incorporated into the portion of the overall County servicing project cost which is billable to the Owner.
- (i) The grinder pump will be installed outside of any structures in a location agreeable to both the County and Owner
- (j) Upon connection, the County/Installer will meet with the Owner to discuss and verify operation of the grinder pump system and provide a booklet and keys.
- (k) The County will organize a warranty inspection by the grinder pump manufacturer within 10-working days of connection to the system.

##### Maintenance, Repairs and Replacement for 4.1

- (a) Although the ownership and responsibility for continued operation, of the grinder pump package remains with the Owner, the County will be responsible for routine maintenance and repairs as well as pump replacement services for all eligible units within the wastewater system in fulfillment of its overall responsibilities with respect to the operation of the County wastewater system. The cost for this service will be part of the monthly sewer rate for the system.

- (b) The County may conduct periodic inspections of the unit to assess performance or deficiencies.
- (c) The County will be responsible for routine maintenance, repairs and pump replacement as part of the operation of the wastewater system and will provide written details to the Owner after work is completed. The County will provide to the Owner an anticipated maintenance schedule that will be reviewed and revised over time.
- (d) Where County staff is of the opinion that damage to a pump has been caused by Owner negligence or violation of the County's sewer use bylaw, the Owner will be notified in writing and will be responsible for the cost of the repairs.
- (e) Where an Owner wishes to relocate a grinder pump, or make changes to plumbing to accommodate a renovation or other property changes, the Owner is responsible for all costs and must obtain County approval of the system changes.

#### **4.2 Grinder Pump Installations as part of a servicing project “not” by an approved installer**

##### New Installations

Section 4.1 clauses (a) to (h) apply.

##### Maintenance, Repairs and Replacement for 4.2

- (a) The County treats this installation as a private pump and will not provide routine maintenance, repair or replacement services as part of the system fees.
- (b) Pump replacement on a normal lifecycle basis will be the County's responsibility. Pumps needing to be replaced that are less than eight years of age will be the responsibility of the Owner.
- (c) At the Owner's request, the County will enter into an agreement with the Owner for ongoing maintenance and repair services including:
  - c.1 after hours emergency repairs
  - c.2 periodic inspections of the unit to assess performance or deficiencies
  - c.3 routine maintenance
- (d) Where staff suspect damage to a pump has been caused by Owner negligence or violation of the County's sewer use bylaw, the Owner will be responsible for the cost of the repairs over and above the maintenance fee agreed to.
- (e) Pump installations that predate this policy will be considered to have been installed by an approved installer and will be subject to section 4.1.

### **4.3 Grinder Pump Installations at the Owners Preference**

#### New Installations

At an Owner's request, the County will provide the grinder pump package to the Owner on a cost recovery basis.

Section 4.1 clauses (a) to (g) apply.

#### Maintenance, Repairs and Replacement for 4.3

- (a) The County treats this installation as a private pump and will not provide routine maintenance, repair or replacement services as part of the system fees.
- (b) Pump replacement is the Owner's responsibility.
- (c) Upon request the County will enter into an agreement with the Owner for ongoing maintenance and repair services including:
  - c.1 after hours emergency repairs
  - c.2 annual inspections of the unit to assess performance or deficiencies
  - c.3 routine maintenance

### **4.4 STEG/STEP SYSTEMS INSTALLATION**

- (a) For STEG (gravity) systems, a septic tank will be provided by the County and delivered to the homeowner's property. The cost of the County providing the septic system including tank, filter and access risers will be incorporated into the portion of the overall County servicing project cost which is billable to the Owner. The homeowner is responsible for the supply and installation of piping (and future maintenance and repair of piping) outside of the septic tank located on private property as well as the connection of existing private plumbing to the municipal sewage service at property line. The County will not supply an alarm system and control panel for STEG (gravity) systems. The homeowner (if desired) may choose to have their plumber install a check valve on the Owner's side of the tank (between tank and residence). The County does not allow a check valve between the tank and municipal property line.
- (b) For STEP (pumped) systems, a greywater pump, alarm and control system and septic tank will be provided by the County and delivered to the Owner's property. The cost of the County providing the septic system including tank, filter and access risers (and greywater pump and alarm control system, for pumped systems only) will be incorporated into the portion of the overall County servicing project cost. In pumped systems, a greywater pump system will be installed in the outlet chamber of the septic tank. An alarm system and control panel will be included with the grey water pumping package. The County will be responsible for on-going maintenance and will replace the alarm system if it is not operating properly. The County is not responsible for any electrical issues prior to the pump panel.
- (c) The Owner is responsible for the costs associated with the installation of the STEG/STEP system including tank and filters (pumps and control panel, if necessary) and the connection of private plumbing to the municipal sewage service at property line. The County will review and

complete a preliminary site inspection / consultation upon being contacted by the Owner.

- (d) The County will provide additional risers if requested by the Owner for the purpose of matching site grading. The cost of these risers will be the responsibility of the Owner and is in addition to the overall County servicing project cost noted in (b).
- (e) All work on private property shall be in compliance with the requirements of the Area Municipality's Building Department and the Ontario Building Code.
- (f) Any upgrade to the property's electrical system required to accommodate the greywater pump will be the sole responsibility of the Owner.
- (g) The County strongly recommends that electrical wiring of the unit be conducted by a licensed electrician. Owners completing their own wiring installations must have the wiring inspected by the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) for compliance with the Electrical Safety Act.
- (h) Following installation, the STEG/STEP is under the full ownership of, and is the responsibility of the County.
- (i) The Owner is responsible for the decommissioning of existing private sanitary disposal systems in accordance with the requirements of the Oxford County Department of Public Health and Emergency Services.
- (j) The Owner is responsible for ongoing electricity costs for pump operation.
- (k) Upon connection, the County staff will meet with the Owner to discuss and verify operation of the greywater pump system.
- (l) The County will organize a warranty inspection by the greywater pump manufacturer within 30 working days of connection to the system.

#### Maintenance, Repairs and Replacement for 4.4

- a) Upon completion of the STEG / STEP installation, the County will provide to the Owner written details and an anticipated maintenance schedule that will be reviewed and revised over time. The County will be responsible for routine maintenance and repairs to the STEG/STEP system including pump and filter inspection and replacement services, pumping of accumulated solids from the tanks in fulfillment of its overall responsibilities with respect to the operation of the County wastewater system. The cost for this service will be part of the monthly sewer rate for the system.
- b) The County may conduct periodic inspections of the unit to assess performance or deficiencies.
- c) Where County staff is of the opinion that damage to system has been caused by Owner negligence or violation of the County's sewer use bylaw, the Owner will be notified in writing and will be responsible for the cost of the repairs.
- d) The owner shall not remove the greywater tank filter under any circumstance since this action could cause the downstream greywater piping system to become plugged with grease, etc. Any owner that does remove or damage the tank filter will be held responsible for the cost of any damage to the sewage system.

## **5.0 MAINTENANCE ACCESS AND FEES**

Through participation in the maintenance program, the Owner grants the County and its contractors the right to enter onto the property to undertake repairs and inspections as necessary. Where possible, when access is required for preventative maintenance or inspections notice will be provided to the Owner at least one business day in advance. Failure to provide reasonable access to the unit will constitute a release to the County of any responsibility for costs associated with repair or replacement of the unit.

As part of a servicing project, the County may register a blanket easement on properties to recognize the access required for maintenance.

The current Owner is required to notify the County in writing when there will be a change of property ownership. The County will then correspond with the new Owner regarding this policy.

### **5.1 Maintenance Fees Based on Rates**

As set out in this policy, the fees for routine maintenance, repairs and pump replacement for installations under sections 4.1 and 4.4 will be incorporated into the system Wastewater Rates which are set on a yearly basis.

### **5.2 Maintenance Fees to be Set**

As set out in this policy, the fees for routine maintenance, repairs and pump replacement for installations under sections 4.2 and 4.3 will be outlined in the County's Fees and Charges Bylaw. This fee is not currently set in the Fees and Charges Bylaw and prior to setting costs, fees for routine maintenance, repairs and pump replacements will be dealt with through agreement between the Owner and Oxford County.

## **6.0 RELOCATIONS**

All costs associated with relocation and/or replacement of a grinder pump package or STEG/STEP units due to property renovations and/or redevelopments are the sole financial responsibility of the Owner. Any such relocations and/or replacements shall be completed by an approved installer and must have prior-approval by the County.

## **7.0 INSURANCE**

The County is not responsible for any property damage, or any claims, costs or damages, associated with the improper use or negligence by the Owner or Occupant related to *the grinder pump package or the STEG/STEP* units or any related infrastructure installed on the property of the Owner. Further, the County is not responsible in any way for investigations or clean-up activities as a result of property damage. The Owner may at their discretion carry insurance to mitigate impacts related to the preceding.

The following examples are provided to illustrate the types of events that the County will not be liable for and is not an exhaustive list.

- (a) Sewage back up due to continued water use during a power outage or pump failure.
- (b) Electrical damage due to lightning strikes/storms.
- (c) Sewage back up due to disposal of substances in violation with the County's sewer use bylaw.

## 8.0 OXFORD COUNTY CONTACT PROCEDURE

Owners eligible under this policy for County routine maintenance and repair of their grinder pumps or STEP/STEG system shall follow the procedure below to request an inspection or repair of their unit.

- (a) Customers will be expected to provide their address (911 number) when calling for service.
- (b) For requests during regular business hours (8:30 am to 4:30 pm) Monday to Friday or for non-emergency requests, the Customer shall call the Customer Service Desk at the Oxford County Administration Building at **519-539-9800 ext. 3915**.
- (c) For emergency requests outside of regular business hours and on weekends, the Customer shall call the Public Works Emergency number at **1-866-537-7778**.
- (d) At the discretion of the County, an Operator may visit the site to inspect the unit or dispatch an approved installer to complete the inspection/repair.
- (e) The County is not responsible for the Owner's costs if they contact a contractor directly without contacting the County.
- (f) Following any repair, the Customer will be provided with a description of the failure and repair completed.