

# ORIENTATION:

## Understanding the Onlot Sewage Program in Pennsylvania, the Historical Context

# 1



### OBJECTIVES:

After completing this chapter, you will be able to . . .

- Articulate what an onlot sewage system is.
- Discuss the historical context of why onlot sewage systems are regulated in Pennsylvania.
- Explain how onlot sewage management and better-trained sewage enforcement officers (SEOs) help to protect the public health.
- Recognize the Pennsylvania regulations book, which regulates the state's sewage facilities planning and permitting programs.



### TEACHING METHODS:

- Self-study
- Videos



### ESTIMATED TIME:

- 1 hour, 30 minutes



### MATERIALS / RESOURCES:

- Computer with Internet access—[www.seotraining.org](http://www.seotraining.org)
- Self-study guide (from Internet or DVD)
- Workbook (from provided hard copy, Internet, or DVD)
- Answer key (from Internet or DVD)
- Course O Resource Book (hard copy):
  - ✓ O-A: Sewage Facilities Act (Act 537)
  - ✓ O-B: Regulations Pa. Code Title 25 book, Chapters 71, 72, & 73
  - ✓ O-C: Orientation DVD



**CHECKLISTS**

The checklists below are to help you organize your training activities. All the listed activities should be completed prior to taking the chapter quiz.



**WORKBOOK ACTIVITIES:**

*These activities are found in the workbook for this chapter. Answer keys are found at [www.seotraining.org](http://www.seotraining.org), **Academy Course Material, Courses, Orientation** (a yellow triangle like the one at left will direct you to the Web), or on the Orientation DVD.*



- \_\_\_\_\_ O-1a Exercise: Act 537
- \_\_\_\_\_ O-1b Exercise: Regulations
- \_\_\_\_\_ O-1c Chapter Review



**ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF WORKBOOK:**

*At various points throughout this Orientation, you may be directed to perform an activity outside the scope of your workbook or self-study guide. When you see a green triangle (like the one to the left), you will be directed to another location (such as your Orientation resource materials) to perform the activity. If the activity involves viewing a DVD, you will see a blue triangle (like the one to the left below).*



- \_\_\_\_\_ O-1i Activity: View DVD – “Down the Drain” and “Onlot System Components”
- \_\_\_\_\_ O-1ii Activity: View DVD – “The Care and Feeding of Your Septic Tank”



**TESTING:**  
**([www.seotraining.org](http://www.seotraining.org), Academy Course Material)**

*When you complete the chapter, you must take the online chapter quiz before you can proceed to the next chapter. To successfully complete Course O, you must take the course test. All chapter quizzes must be completed prior to taking the course test online.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ O-1 Chapter Quiz: Historical Context



Go to the self-study guide for Chapter O-I—Historical Context at [www.seotraining.org](http://www.seotraining.org), Academy Course Material, Courses, Orientation, or found on the Precertification Academy Orientation DVD. Begin by reading the objectives for the chapter on the first page of the self-study guide. The guide will direct you when you are to return to this workbook to complete exercises.

### O-Ia—EXERCISE: Act 537

*Turn to Section 2. Definitions in Act 537 and fill in the blanks to the definitions below:*

1. **“Alternate sewage system”** means a method of demonstrated onlot sewage treatment and disposal not described in the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. **“Municipality”** means a city, town, township, borough, or home rule municipality other than a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. **“Official plan”** means a comprehensive plan for the provision of adequate sewage systems adopted by a \_\_\_\_\_ . . . and submitted to and approved by the state Department of Environmental [Protection] as provided herein.

4. *Turn to Section 5(d)(3) and fill in the blank below:*

- (d) Every official plan shall:
- (3) Provide for adequate sewage treatment facilities, which will prevent the discharge of untreated or inadequately treated sewage or other waste into any \_\_\_\_\_ or otherwise provide for the safe and sanitary treatment of sewage or other waste.

5. *Turn to Section 7(a)(1) and fill in the blanks below.*

No person shall install, construct, or award a contract for construction, or alter, repair or connect to an individual sewage system . . . for which an individual sewage system . . . is to be installed without first obtaining a \_\_\_\_\_ indicating that the site and the plans and specifications of such system are in \_\_\_\_\_ with the provisions of the act and the standards adopted pursuant to this act.

6. *Turn to Section 8(b)(1) and fill in the blanks below.*

(b) Each local agency in addition to the powers and duties conferred upon it by existing law shall have the power and the duty:

(1) To \_\_\_\_\_ an adequate number of sewage enforcement officers or contract with individuals, firms, or corporations to adequately perform the services of sewage enforcement officers to administer the provisions of section 7 of this act within the time periods set forth in this act and in accordance with the rules and regulations of the department. No person shall be employed or contracted as a sewage enforcement officer unless said person has been \_\_\_\_\_ by the department pursuant to standards set by the Environmental Quality Board.



Return to the **self-study guide**.

**O-Ib—EXERCISE: Regulations**

*Turn to Section 71.1. Definitions in the regulations. This section reviews words and terms used in this chapter with which you should become more familiar. Use the regulations to find the answers to this exercise by looking up the following definitions and filling in the missing words.*

1. **Act** – The Pennsylvania \_\_\_\_\_ Facilities Act.
2. **Local agency** – A municipality (or any combination of municipalities acting cooperatively or jointly under the laws of the Commonwealth), a \_\_\_\_\_, county department of \_\_\_\_\_, or joint county department of health.
3. **Municipality** – A city, town, \_\_\_\_\_, borough, or home rule municipality other than a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. **Sewage** – A substance that contains the waste products or excrement or other discharge from the bodies of human beings or animals and noxious or deleterious substances being harmful or inimical to the \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, or to animal or aquatic life, or to the use of water for domestic \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ or for recreation.
5. **Sewage enforcement officer** – An official of the \_\_\_\_\_ who reviews permit applications and sewage facilities \_\_\_\_\_, issues \_\_\_\_\_ as authorized by the act, and conducts \_\_\_\_\_ and inspections that are necessary to implement the act and the regulations thereunder.
6. **Sewage facilities** – A system of sewage collection, conveyance, treatment, and \_\_\_\_\_, which will prevent the discharge of \_\_\_\_\_ or inadequately treated sewage or other waste into waters of this Commonwealth or otherwise provide for the safe and sanitary treatment and disposal of sewage or other waste.
7. **Individual onlot sewage system** – An individual sewage system which uses a system of piping, \_\_\_\_\_, or other facilities for collecting, treating, and disposing of sewage into a soil \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ or spray field or by retention in a retaining tank.

8. **Sewage management program** – A program authorized by the official action of a \_\_\_\_\_ for the administration, management, and regulation of the \_\_\_\_\_ of sewage.

## O-Ic—CHAPTER REVIEW

*Answer the following questions as a review.*

**1. Which of the following statements about Act 537 are true?**

(Circle all that apply.)

- A) The act was passed in 1966 to address problems caused by malfunctioning onlot systems.
- B) The act is also called the Sewage Management Act.
- C) The act empowered the state to set standards and required permits for onlot sewage systems.
- D) The act gives local governments the option to develop a sewage facilities official plan.

**2. Which statement(s) best describe a sewage facilities official plan?** (Circle all that apply.)

- A) Plan created by the state to show which municipalities have appointed SEOs and addressed local planning issues.
- B) Plan created by a municipality to show where central sewage collection is provided and where sewage disposal is handled by onlot sewage systems.
- C) Plan developed by a municipality to help protect the quality of the state's water supply and to protect the public health from diseases.
- D) Plan developed by the state to spell out the guidelines for alternate technologies used as onlot systems.

**3. True or False.** Municipalities are required to develop and maintain an up-to-date sewage facilities official plan.

4. A municipality may address sewage management with which of the following actions? (Circle all that apply.)

- A) Educate homeowners about the importance of maintaining their onlot systems.
- B) Require periodic pumping of septic tanks.
- C) Require onlot systems to be replaced every five years.
- D) Institute procedures for testing and monitoring onlot systems.
- E) Require periodic inspections of onlot systems.

5. True or False. The SEO can play a beneficial role in managing onlot sewage systems for a municipality.



Go to [www.seotraining.org](http://www.seotraining.org), *Academy Course Material, Courses, Orientation, Chapter O-1, Chapter Study Materials, Answer Key*, to view the answers to the workbook questions.



Return to the **self-study guide** to review the chapter Key Points and for instructions on taking the chapter quiz.