

ORIENTATION:

Understanding the Powers and Duties of the Sewage Enforcement Officer

2



OBJECTIVES:

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

- Discuss the powers and duties of the sewage enforcement officer (SEO).
- Identify the three major responsibilities of the SEO as described in the Sewage Facilities Act (Act 537).
- Understand and describe the SEO's role in the four stages of the permit process.
- Articulate what the SEO's role is in investigating and enforcing Act 537.
- Identify some of the essential skills that an SEO must have to perform his or her job effectively.



TEACHING METHODS:

- Self-study



ESTIMATED TIME:

- 2 hours



MATERIALS/RESOURCES:

- Computer with Internet access—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-B: Regulations Pa. Code Title 25 book, Chapters 71, 72, & 73
- Orientation resources material (on Internet):
 - ✓ O-2 Planning Module
 - ✓ O-2 Permit Application & Permit



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, **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-2a Exercise: Definition of SEO
- _____ O-2b Exercise: SEO’s Responsibility #1
- _____ O-2c Exercise: Review Questions
- _____ O-2d Exercise: SEO’s Responsibility #2
- _____ O-2e Exercise: Review Questions
- _____ O-2f Exercise: Revoking Permits
- _____ O-2g Exercise: SEO’s Responsibility #3
- _____ O-2h Exercise: Review SEO’s Job Responsibilities
- _____ O-2i Chapter Review



TESTING:
(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.

- _____ O-2 Chapter Quiz: SEO’s Powers & Duties



Go to the **self-study guide** for Chapter O-2—SEO's Powers and Duties at 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-2a—EXERCISE: Definition of SEO



Turn to Section 71.1 in the regulations, and find the definition of a sewage enforcement officer. Fill in the following blanks from the modified definition below.

The sewage enforcement officer is an official of the _____ who . . .

- Reviews sewage facilities planning _____ .
- Reviews permit applications for onlot sewage systems and issues _____ for systems that meet the proper specifications.
- Conducts _____ and _____ that are necessary to implement Act 537 and its regulations.



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

O-2b—EXERCISE: SEO's Responsibility #1— Planning Modules

Fill in the following words in their correct placement within the sentence below:

new observe suitable

To conduct or _____ site testing to determine if a proposed site for a _____ subdivision or development is generally _____ for onlot sewage treatment systems.

O-2c—EXERCISE: Review Questions

As a review of this chapter so far, answer the following questions.

1. **True or False.** The SEO works directly for the commonwealth.

2. **True or False.** A local agency can be a township, a borough, a county, or a county health department.

3. **Act 537 requires a local agency to retain how many SEOs?**
 - A) One
 - B) Two
 - C) One or two
 - D) None. The state, not the local agency, retains SEOs to issue permits.

4. **What are the various ways that a local agency may retain/appoint an SEO? (Circle all that apply.)**
 - A) Hiring SEOs as employees or on contract.
 - B) Through a multimunicipal local agency.
 - C) Through a county health department.
 - D) On a contract basis through the state Department of Environmental Protection

5. **True or False.** The appointed SEO for a local agency is the only person who can issue, deny, and revoke permits for onlot sewage systems.

6. **What is a planning module?**

- A) A document that addresses present and future sewage disposal needs of a community.
- B) A form used by a soil scientist to identify soil conditions on a site.
- C) A form developed by the DEP and used by a municipality to include a new proposed subdivision or development in the municipality's official plan.
- D) A form used by the homeowner to apply for an onlot permit.

7. **True or False.** The SEO does not play any role in reviewing the planning module.

8. **What are some ways an SEO may determine if a site is generally suitable for an onlot sewage system?** (Circle all that apply.)

- A) By examining the soils at the site.
- B) By measuring the slope of the site.
- C) By checking isolation distances.
- D) By observing the various testing as it occurs at a site.
- E) By conducting the necessary onsite tests him or herself.



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

O-2d—EXERCISE: SEO's Responsibility #2— Review and Issue Permits

Fill in the following words in their correct placement within the sentences below:

issues denies qualifies

To review a permit application and decide whether a site _____ for an onlot system and whether the proposed onlot system meets the requirements of Act 537 and its regulations. If it does, the SEO _____ a permit. If not, and the applicant refuses to make the necessary changes, the SEO _____ the permit.

O-2e—EXERCISE: Review Questions

As a review of the chapter so far, answer the following questions.

1. When must a permit for an onlot sewage system be issued? (Circle all that apply.)

- A) Before an onlot sewage system can be built on a site.
- B) After an onlot sewage system built on a site is inspected by the SEO.
- C) Once the SEO determines through on-site testing that a site qualifies for an onlot system, and reviews the complete design.
- D) At the same time that a homeowner files a planning module with a local agency.

2. Who issues a sewage permit for the property owner to begin construction of an onlot sewage system?

- A) The local agency's governing body
- B) The local agency's secretary
- C) The local agency's SEO
- D) The Department of Environmental Protection

3. During which stage(s) in the sewage permit process is the permit actually issued or denied?

- A) Preliminary stage
- B) Site evaluation stage
- C) System design stage
- D) Inspection stage

4. During which stage(s) does an SEO conduct or observe on-site tests to confirm suitability for an onlot sewage system?

- A) Preliminary stage
- B) Site evaluation stage
- C) System design stage
- D) Inspection stage

5. What occurs during the system design stage of the permit process? (Circle all that apply.)

- A) The SEO designs the onlot sewage system.
- B) The SEO reviews the design of a system.
- C) The permit is issued or denied.
- D) The system is installed.

6. What happens if, during a permit application review, the design for a proposed onlot system does not meet the necessary regulations and requirements determined by the on-site test results? (Circle all that apply.)

- A) The SEO issues the permit with the caveat that changes are required within a specified time period.
- B) The SEO denies the permit.
- C) The SEO revokes the permit.
- D) The applicant must make sure the problems with the design or site evaluation are addressed before resubmitting the proposal.

7. What role(s) does the local agency SEO play in the permitting process? (Circle all that apply.)

- A) Verifies if a planning module is necessary and completed.
- B) Conducts or verifies on-site tests.
- C) Designs the onlot system for the homeowner.
- D) Reviews the design of an onlot system.



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

O-2f—EXERCISE: Revoking Permits



Turn to Section 72.28 of the regulations and fill in the following information about the revocation of permits.

The local agency SEO must revoke a permit at any time for any of the following reasons:

1. When a change has occurred in the _____ conditions of lands, which will materially affect the operation of an onlot sewage system.
2. When one or more tests related to the issuance of a permit has not been properly _____.
3. When information related to the issuance of a permit has been _____.
4. When the original decision of the local agency failed to conform with the _____.
5. When the permittee has _____ the act, the regulations, or the requirements of the permit.



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

**O-2g—EXERCISE: SEO’s Responsibility #3—
Conduct Investigations and Inspections**

Fill in the following words in their correct placement within the sentence below:

investigate inspections constructed

To conduct _____ of onlot sewage systems as they are being _____ and before they may be covered and to _____ malfunctioning onlot sewage systems.

O-2h—EXERCISE: Review SEO’s Job Responsibilities

Place a checkmark next to the tasks below that fall under the job responsibilities of the local agency SEO.

- _____ May conduct on-site testing for planning or permitting.
- _____ Complete all parts of a planning module.
- _____ Verify on-site testing for planning or permitting.
- _____ Review permit applications and system designs.
- _____ Design onlot sewage systems.
- _____ Verify math calculations on the design.
- _____ Keep accurate records of expenses and time related to enforcement activities.
- _____ Complete and submit reimbursement forms to the state.
- _____ Advise the local agency of violations of Act 537.
- _____ Arrest violators of Act 537.



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

O-2i—CHAPTER REVIEW

Answer the following questions to review this chapter.

1. What are the responsibilities of the local agency SEO?

(Circle all that apply.)

- A) Review sewage facilities planning modules.
- B) Design onlot sewage systems.
- C) Review permit applications.
- D) Issue permits for onlot systems that meet the proper specifications.
- E) Conduct investigations and inspections of onlot systems.

2. How may a local agency SEO be employed? (Circle all that apply.)

- A) By an individual municipality
- B) By a multimunicipal local agency
- C) By a county health department
- D) By the commonwealth

3. True or False. Planning modules are forms developed by a municipality, filled out by a developer, and used by the state to develop a master official plan.

4. What is the maximum flow for an onlot sewage system for which an SEO may issue a permit?

- A) 5,000 gallons per day
- B) 10,000 gallons per day
- C) 20,000 gallons per day
- D) 50,000 gallons per day

5. Who may not design an onlot sewage system for a homeowner?

- A) A professional designer
- B) An engineer
- C) The local agency SEO issuing the sewage permit
- D) An SEO from another municipality
- E) The homeowner

6. Who must make the final inspection for approval to cover an onlot sewage system?

- A) The professional designer
- B) The municipal engineer
- C) The zoning officer
- D) The local agency SEO

7. True or False. The local agency may participate in a state program providing reimbursement for Act 537 planning and permitting activities.

8. What is the difference between denying and revoking a permit?

- A) The SEO denies the permit, while the state revokes a permit.
- B) The permit is denied when approval to construct an onlot system cannot be granted; the permit is revoked after it is issued.
- C) The SEO denies the permit during interim inspections and revokes the permit after the final inspection.
- D) There is no difference; the terms may be used interchangeably.

9. Whose job is it to investigate and resolve onlot system malfunctions?

- A) The local police
- B) The local planning commission
- C) The local agency SEO
- D) The local zoning officer

10. Which of the following skills related to enforcement should an SEO possess? (Circle all that apply.)

- A) Know how to obtain a search warrant.
- B) Know how a courtroom operates.
- C) Know how to make an arrest.
- D) Know how to be an effective witness.
- E) Know how to conduct an investigation.

11. True or False. The SEO may install, design, or sell materials for onlot systems in areas within his or her jurisdiction.

12. True or False. When issuing a permit, an SEO does not have to worry about conflicts of interest.



Go to www.seotraining.org, *Academy Course Material, Courses, Orientation, Chapter O-2, 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.