



M. WARD HINDS, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Officer

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**SNOHOMISH HEALTH DISTRICT
RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF HEALTH**

90-43

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 90-43

**RESOLUTION SUBJECT: SUPPLEMENTAL ONSITE SEWAGE DISPOSAL POLICIES
AND PROCEDURES/VERTICAL SEPARATION**

WHEREAS RCW 70.05.070 requires that "The local health officer, acting under direction of the local board of health...shall:

(1) Enforce the public health statutes of the state, rules and regulations of the State Board of Health and the Secretary of Social and Health Services, and all local health rules, regulations and ordinances within his jurisdiction;

(2) Take such action as is necessary to maintain health and sanitation supervision over the territory within his jurisdiction...", and

WHEREAS the Snohomish Health District Board of Health, by Resolution #84-23, adopted WAC 248-96 as the Rules and Regulations Governing Onsite Sewage Disposal to be followed and enforced by the Snohomish Health District, and

WHEREAS WAC 248-96-025 Local Regulation, section (8) states, "Nothing in these regulations shall prohibit the adoption and enforcement of more stringent regulations by local health departments where such regulations are needed to protect the public health," and

WHEREAS WAC 248-96-100(2) states "SSAS shall not be permitted in areas where a vertical separation of three feet cannot be maintained; The Health Officer shall require such greater vertical separation as needed to protect health when the aquifer is used for a potable water supply. The health officer may reduce the vertical separation provided the system is designed by a professional engineer, a registered sanitarian or a certified designer. However, in no case shall the separation be less than one foot," and

WHEREAS, The 1980 EPA Manual of On-site Wastewater Treatment and Disposal states that "Travel through two to four feet of unsaturated soil is necessary to provide adequate removal of pathogenic organisms." Furthermore, controlled scientific studies before and since 1980 have confirmed the need for two to four feet of vertical separation, and

WHEREAS, an increased vertical separation decreases the threat of disease transmission by decreasing the likelihood of sewage reaching groundwater or a restrictive layer before it is adequately treated, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Health agrees that reducing vertical separation down to 1 foot is without technical justification regardless of the qualifications of the individual submitting the design, and believes that WAC 248-96-100(2) means that three feet of vertical separation is required unless a system is designed to provide a degree of treatment equivalent to three feet of vertical separation, and

WHEREAS, the committee currently revising WAC 248-96, comprised of technical experts in the field of onsite sewage disposal, have set forth draft revised vertical separation requirements establishing a minimum of 2 ft. of vertical separation using pressure distribution or 3 ft. of vertical separation or a DOH approved alternative system, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Health recognizes that two to four feet of vertical separation is technically justified and provides a known minimum level of treatment necessary to prevent adverse impacts to public health, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Health recognizes that public health practice should emphasize prevention, rather than after the fact correction, and

WHEREAS, the proposed revisions to WAC 248-96 are not scheduled to become effective until July of 1991, and

WHEREAS, the Board of Health believes that immediate steps need to be taken to assure that onsite sewage disposal systems are designed and installed in soil conditions and on lots in such a manner to provide a safe level of treatment of sewage containing potentially pathogenic organisms prior to entering groundwaters or restrictive layers,

NOW THEREFORE to protect the public health, the Board of Health requires that all new onsite sewage disposal systems must have three feet of vertical separation with gravity flow; or two feet of vertical separation with pressure distribution; or the system must meet the requirements of Department of Health alternative system guidelines.

This requirement is effective for all new and renewal applications as of the expiration of ninety (90) days from transmittal of a copy of this resolution to the Department of Health, or earlier in the event Snohomish Health District receives written approval from the Department of Health prior to the expiration of said ninety (90) day period.

Adopted this 11th day of September, 1990.



Ron Benton, Vice-Chair
Board of Health

ATTEST:



M. Ward Hinds, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Officer

September 11, 1990

KRISTINE M. GEBBIE
Secretary



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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September 27, 1990

M. Ward Hinds, M.D., M.P.H.
Health Officer
Snohomish Health District
3000 Rockefeller Avenue
Everett, Washington 98201

Dear Dr. Hinds:

In accordance with the procedure established in WAC 248-96-025, the department has reviewed resolution number 90-43 adopted by the Snohomish Health District Board of Health on September 11, 1990. The resolution is consistent with the intent of WAC 248-96 and is hereby approved.

Sincerely,

KRISTINE M. GEBBIE
Secretary