



Whitman County Environmental Health

1205 SE Pro Mall Blvd #203 Pullman, WA 99163

310 N Main Street #108 Colfax, WA 99111

EMAIL: eh@whitmancounty.net

Pullman: 509-332-6752

Colfax: 509-397-6280

ON-SITE SEPTIC SYSTEM EVALUATOR'S EXAM

Read each question carefully. Circle the option you think is the best answer based on information from the EPA Design Manual, Washington State Board of Health On-Site Sewage Systems Chapter 246-272A WAC and Whitman County Rules and Regulations. There are 30 questions. **You need to get 23 questions correct (76%) to pass the test.** Good luck!

- 1. Which of the following are signs of septic system failure?**
 - a. Surfacing effluent
 - b. Crack in bottom of tank
 - c. Pipe to the creek
 - d. All of the above

- 2. The septic tank is buried over 5 feet. Once you dig it up, you recommend to the homeowner to:**
 - a. Spray paint the location of the tank for next time
 - b. Install risers for easier tank access for anything deeper than 6" below surface
 - c. Park your RV over this location to protect it
 - d. All of the above

- 3. There is no as-built on file for the system that you are assessing. What do you do?**
 - a. Cancel the assessment
 - b. Prepare to locate, measure and map all components of the system
 - c. Work with the homeowner's records and memory to locate the drainfield
 - d. B & C

- 4. Which of the following would require corrective action, but is not classified as failing?**
 - a. Broken or malfunctioning transfer lines
 - b. Cracked septic tank lid
 - c. Pipe to creek
 - d. A & B
 - e. All of the above

- 5. You are assessing a system that has a broken sewer line from the tank to the distribution box. Effluent is not surfacing on the ground or returning to the tank. You would classify this as:**
 - a. Satisfactory
 - b. Corrective action needed
 - c. Failure
 - d. More information needed to answer

- 6. Which of the following could be used to locate a septic tank that does not have an as-built on file?**
 - a. Just start digging around with an excavator
 - b. Tile probe

- c. Look for grass changes
 - d. B & C
- 7. You notice that the drainfield is under the driveway or parking lot – you inform the homeowner that:**
- a. This is totally fine
 - b. It is OK to have a tank under the driveway, but not the drainfield
 - c. It is not recommended to drive or park over a drainfield because it increases the chance of failure
 - d. It is OK to park farm equipment over drainfields, just not cars you drive all the time
- 8. You see there is a large amount of solids in the second compartment of a tank, what do you recommend?**
- a. Pumping the tank
 - b. Jetting the drainfield to remove solids
 - c. Nothing, this is normal
 - d. A & B
- 9. Septic assessments for residential gravity systems should be done routinely on a schedule of:**
- a. Once per month
 - b. Once per year
 - c. Once every 3-5 years
 - d. Hopefully never if everything is working right
- 10. You are performing an assessment on a system involving a pump, what should you do?**
- a. Review the Operation and Maintenance manual from the designer
 - b. Review the as-built drawing
 - c. Check the on, off and alarm floats
 - d. All of the above
- 11. There are no baffles on the septic tank. Everything else is functioning fine. You would classify this system as:**
- a. Satisfactory
 - b. Corrective action needed
 - c. Failure
 - d. More information needed to answer
- 12. One way to see if the drainfield is taking water is to**
- a. Have the homeowner run several appliances at the same time such as washer, dishwasher, sinks and showers and observe the inside of the tank
 - b. Run a hose down the second compartment of the tank until the water flows back from the drainfield
 - c. Run a hose down the tank at a portion of the daily flow the system was designed for and see if water flows back from the drainfield
 - d. A & C

13. You arrive to an assessment and see there is effluent surfacing on the ground above the drainfield, you would classify this system as:

- a. Satisfactory
- b. Corrective action needed
- c. Failure
- d. More information needed to answer

14. Septic assessments for alternative systems (residential or commercial) should be done routinely on a schedule of:

- a. Once per month
- b. Once per year
- c. Once every 3-5 years
- d. Hopefully never if everything is working right

15. The septic tank only has one compartment. You notify the homeowner that:

- a. This is a perfectly fine septic tank
- b. Two compartments are the current standard and you recommend a tank replacement
- c. Two compartments provide better treatment before the effluent enters drainfield
- d. B & C

16. Methods to locating and measuring a drainfield include:

- a. Use of a camera or scope
- b. Locating the distribution box
- c. Locating monitoring ports and measuring from the distribution box
- d. Look for grass changes
- e. All of the above

17. The drainfield and tank is undersized for the number of bedrooms in the house, but is functioning properly and has no signs of failure. You classify this as:

- a. Satisfactory
- b. Corrective action needed
- c. Failure
- d. Need more information to answer

18. The septic tank is functioning properly if:

- a. The risers are free of cracks and visible damage
- b. The tank is free of strong overpowering odors
- c. Scum layer is below lid opening
- d. All of the above

19. It is spring and there has been a lot of rainfall. You are assessing a system and notice that the drainfield is saturated. When you test the tank to see if the field is taking water, the water runs right back into the tank. What do you do?

- a. Pump the tank or schedule to pump the tank
- b. Contact the Whitman County Public Health
- c. Classify this system as failing
- d. A & B

- 20. The septic tank is a one compartment steel tank with a pipe leading to the drainage ditch, you classify this as**
- Satisfactory
 - Corrective action needed
 - Failure
 - More information needed to answer
- 21. The term “surfacing effluent” over drainfield can be determined by:**
- Odors and damp areas over field
 - Mushy and swampy areas
 - Monitoring ports show high standing water
 - All of the above
- 22. To inspect distribution box in gravity systems, do the following:**
- Check for baffles
 - Check for solids and clogs, cracks and leaks, even flow and level settling
 - Check the perforation of pipes
 - None of the above
- 23. After the assessment, you should:**
- Wash all tools and clean up area to ensure no effluent is exposed to homeowners
 - Complete Whitman County Assessment form with all associated diagrams required
 - Schedule to pump if necessary
 - All of the above
- 24. The tank is due to be pumped if:**
- The scum layer is more than 6” deep and/or above the baffles
 - If sludge depth is more than 12”
 - If it has been more than 5 years, regardless of how much sewage is in tank
 - A & B
 - All of the above
- 25. You have classified a system as “Failing” – what do you do next?**
- Begin repairing the system immediately
 - Complete the comment section of the assessment form detailing what corrective action is needed to repair the system & return the form to Whitman County Public Health
 - Let the homeowner know the system is completely fine and they don’t need to fix anything
 - Don’t turn in the assessment form and fix the system without permit

- 26. You have been hired to do a septic assessment for a system because the homeowner wants to add a shop to their property. There is no as-built drawing on file. What all must you do to complete the assessment?**
- Locate and assess all components of the drainfield
 - Discuss with the homeowner the location of the proposed shop and verify where their replacement system is located
 - Submit a map and diagram of the existing system, replacement area, and proposed shop location
 - All of the above
- 27. You arrive to an assessment and see that sewage is streaming steadily on the surface. What should you do FIRST:**
- Pump the tank
 - Locate and measure the drainfield
 - Call Whitman County Public Health
 - Replace the tank
- 28. A system you are assessing has an as-built on file. When you begin your assessment, you notice the as-built diagram does not match what you are seeing. What do you do?**
- Confirm the address of the as-built and system you are assessing
 - Contact Whitman County Public Health
 - Locate, map and measure the system you are assessing
 - All of the above
- 29. Factors that can play into a saturated drainfield include:**
- Weather and rainfall
 - Overuse of system
 - Age and size system
 - Tank compartments
 - All of the above
- 30. You are inspecting a pump tank on an alternative system. Which of the following is a sign that there is a malfunction?**
- The alarm does not sound on the top float
 - The floats are not attached on the float tree
 - The electrical junction box is corroded or wires are damaged
 - There are solids in the pump tank
 - All of the above