

Sewage Facilities Planning and Permitting Program

DEP's Bureau of Clean Water manages the Sewage Facilities Program, which implements the Pennsylvania Sewage Facilities Act (known as "[Act 537](#)") and enforces 25 Pa. Code [Chapters 71](#), [72](#), and [73](#). Chapter 71 is titled "Administration of Sewage Facilities Planning Program", Chapter 72 is titled "Administration of Sewage Facilities Permitting Program" and Chapter 73 is titled "Standards for Onlot Sewage Treatment Facilities". The program addresses existing sewage disposal needs and helps prevent future problems through proper planning, permitting, design, operation, and maintenance of all types of sewage facilities. More information about the Sewage Facilities Program can be found [here](#).

Act 537 requires all municipalities to develop and maintain up-to-date sewage facilities plans to protect public health from diseases, prevent future sewage treatment problems, and protect the quality of the state's surface water and groundwater. Act 537 enforces the requirement for municipalities to develop and maintain a sewage management program (SMP) to ensure areas that cannot be served by public sewer facilities are properly managing sewage systems. Detailed information about Act 537 can be found [here](#). In addition, the [Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law of 1937](#), Article II contains provisions for prohibiting and regulating sewage discharges into waters of the Commonwealth.

The program provides oversight of the municipalities and local agencies that administer the program at the municipal level. DEP, local agencies, and Sewage Enforcement Officers are provided with many powers and duties that provide for protection of both surface and ground waters.

Act 537 also provides for new land development to be served with sufficient long-term sewage disposal via public and private sewage systems. The [Domestic Wastewater Facilities Manual](#) contains guidance on the design and construction of domestic wastewater treatment facilities. These detailed instructions provide guidance that is designed to protect surface water, groundwater, and other types of environments. The [Small Flow Treatment Facilities Manual](#) is overall guidance for sewage treatment facilities that are equal to or less than 2,000 gallons per day. Standards for individual and community onlot systems are provided in 25 Pa. Code Chapter 73 and the alternate onlot system listing. These guidance documents ensure that potential sewage pollution is mitigated from all sources, big and small.