

**DPS****Montgomery County  
Department of Permitting Services**

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## Guidelines - Well and Septic Building Permit for Additions/Improvements

**Septic systems** are sized based upon the number of bedrooms (or rooms that may serve as bedrooms) in a home as well as the soil conditions encountered in the septic reserve area. Any proposal for an increase in “habitable space” to an existing dwelling must be evaluated for adequate septic capacity and adherence to current setback requirements.

**Habitable Space** is defined as “any room meeting the requirements in the Building Officials Conference of America Code as approved by the Montgomery County Council for sleeping, living, cooking or dining purposes, excluding such places as closets, pantries, bath or toilet rooms, hallways, laundries, storage spaces, utility rooms and similar spaces, and excluding rooms which are not heated.” (Executive Regulation 28-93 AM)

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**Approval of an addition of less than 25 percent of the habitable square footage** of the existing structure not involving encroachment into the sewage disposal area may be granted if this office has sufficient information for the existing septic system on file. If this office has no record of the existing septic system, then water table evaluation, percolation testing and installation of a replacement septic system may be necessary prior to permit approval.

**Approval of an addition of any bedrooms or less than 50 percent but more than 25 percent of the habitable square footage** of the existing living quarters of the structure will depend on one of the following:

- (1) if this office has no record of the septic system on file, then satisfactory water table and percolation tests, location and approval of existing septic tank, inspection of absorption area for evidence of failure, and confirmation of an initial and two recovery absorption areas are required prior to consideration for building permit approval.
- (2) If this office has a previously approved septic system permit on file that includes adequate septic reserve area, accurate location of the septic tank and satisfactory percolation tests, then the permit for the proposed addition may be approved. Additional percolation testing and proof of adequate septic reserve area may be required based upon a review of the records and percolation test results.

*Prior to consideration for building permit approval, applicant shall apply for a septic system permit and complete installation of the septic system upgrade if required.*

**Approval of major additions of three bedrooms or more and/or living quarters constituting 50 percent or more of the habitable square footage** of the existing structure require that current regulations must be met to include confirmation of a septic reserve area (at least 10,000 square feet in area) sufficient to accommodate an initial and two replacement septic systems. The septic tank location must be confirmed if the addition requires expansion of the foundation.

*Prior to consideration for building permit approval, applicant shall apply for a septic system permit and complete installation of the septic system upgrade if required.*

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**Guest house**, bedroom or other habitable space in separate and detached buildings require separate on-site sewage disposal and on-site water supply systems.

**Pool houses** (changing room, showers, toilet, and lavatory) may be connected to an existing septic system if the system meets standards for the existing house. However, if the pool house contains bedrooms or rooms that could serve as bedrooms as well as kitchen facilities, then this office may require establishment of a separate septic reserve area to accommodate an initial septic system as well as two replacement systems.

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