

**DPS**Montgomery County
Department of Permitting Services

Well and Septic Guideline for Septic System Abandonment

The following is a step-by-step process for proper abandonment of an existing septic system:

1. Prior to the start of any work, the property owner or contractor should contact the Well and Septic office to request a copy of the septic system permit on file for the subject property. Depending on the age of the home, a permit may not be available.
2. The septic tank (and drywells if present) should be pumped by a Montgomery County licensed scavenger with the lid(s) crushed into the structure.
3. The abandoned septic tank (and drywells if present) must be backfilled with suitable soil. Other backfill materials, such as gravel or concrete, may be used (or required) in cases where the abandoned septic tank and/or drywells are near current or planned structures.
4. If the abandoned system includes a trench or trenches within 20 feet of a proposed house foundation, any liquid remaining in the trench(es) shall be pumped out by a licensed scavenger. The drain field must then be uncovered to locate the contaminated components of the system, including the distribution box(es), pipe, and gravel or stone. The extent of contaminated soil surrounding the system must also be determined.
5. If any of the components of the abandoned septic system are to be removed from the property, these materials shall be considered 'environmental or hazardous waste' and must be disposed of in accordance with current Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) guidelines. All 'environmental or hazardous waste' removed from the site must be appropriately transported to an MDE-approved landfill or facility for proper disposal. The contractor responsible for this process must provide written documentation of intent to DPS Well and Septic (by text or email) with a minimum of 48 hours' advance notice of the removal.
6. The contractor performing the septic system abandonment should submit a detailed report of the work performed to the DPS Well and Septic office upon completion, OR contact the area inspector at least 24 hours in advance to request inspection of the septic system abandonment as it is completed.

For properties west of I-270, contact: jared.sluzalis@montgomerycountymd.gov

For properties east of I-270, contact: kim.beall@montgomerycountymd.gov

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