



# Springfield Township, Bucks County

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January X, 2015

Springfield Township Resident  
2320 Township Road  
Quakertown, PA 18951

Dear Neighbor:

If you've received this letter, it's because the Township and/or the Bucks County Health Department believes you have an On-Lot Disposal System (OLDS) for your sewage disposal. And if you have an OLDS it's highly likely that you've been maintaining it by pumping out your septic tank periodically. The Township has a relatively new sewage management ordinance that tasks OLDS owners with notifying the Township when pumping occurs, and requires pumping at least once every 3 years.

**How will this work?** For 99% of OLDS owners, it will be very easy. You're already maintaining your septic system. You'll simply provide a form to the contractor you use to pump out your septic tank. Have the contractor fill out the form while he's performing the service. Attach a copy of the receipt he gives you and then email, fax, mail, or drop-off the form to the Township. You're done! The form is only 1 page long, and is designed to be understandable and filled out very quickly. If you lose your form we have one on the website you can print at home.

The Township will log your form into its permit database when we receive it. That starts the clock again, and you'll have 3 years from the last pumping to pump again. There's no problem if you want to pump more frequently. Simply fill out the form each time and send it in. The Township will log your form into its database and you will have a new 3 year window before it has to be pumped again.

**What happens if I forget?** No worries. The Township will send a postcard reminder about 6 months before the end of your 3 year window. That should give plenty of time to get a pumping scheduled and get your form turned in.

**What happens if I don't do it, or I just believe I shouldn't have to tell the Township when I pump?**

Well, first you'll get a more serious reminder called a "Notice of Violation." The NOV will give you a short amount of time to get pumped and send in your form. If you still don't do it, the Township will file citations with the District Justice's Office, and that could become expensive for you. The Ordinance allows the District Judge to impose a fine of \$600 each day you're found to be in violation of the Ordinance. Since it's very expensive to repair a malfunctioning OLDS, and most people maintain them anyway, the Township is hopeful not many people will need a NOV to remind them.

**Why is this necessary?** Good question. It would be easy to simply blame the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania because the requirement to have an ordinance and septage management plan comes from state law. *However, the more responsible answer is because maintaining a septic system ensures it functions properly and raw sewage doesn't pollute the Township's streams and ground.* If everyone acted responsibly and neighborly 100% of the time, then we might not need an ordinance to remind us to do something we should. Unfortunately that's not always the case, so the Township put in minimal regulations to protect public health.

The Board of Supervisors has discussed the best and least intrusive way to implement the Ordinance, and it will begin on January 1, 2015 so you'll have 3 years—until December 31, 2017—to provide proof of pumping.

**Are there other things I should know?** Art Carlson of the Bucks County Health Department has the following tips for homeowners:

1. Make sure your pumper has a license from the Bucks County Health Department. There should be a current sticker on the truck. This ensures the pumper's truck has been inspected and has permission to discharge sewage to an approved sewage treatment plant.
2. Make sure your pumper is using the manhole cover at the top of the tank and not putting the hose down the small port available in some tanks. It's easy to cause damage to the baffles unless access is through the manhole.
3. Make sure your pumper is servicing all tanks associated with your system.
4. Make sure your pumper takes everything from the tank. There are a few pumpers who will pump the sludge and the liquid into separate compartments and then pump the liquid back into your septic tank when the sludge is removed. Your tank should be empty when the pumper is done.

**Where can I get more information?** The Township's website ([www.springfieldbucks.org](http://www.springfieldbucks.org)) has links to all forms and a copy of the ordinance. You can also find links to the Township's Act 537 (Sewage Management) Plan and the Bucks County Health Department. Finally there is a list of sewage pumping contractors who are licensed by the Bucks County Health Department.

And of course you can contact the Township office.

Most Respectfully,

Michael J. Brown  
Township Manager