

Rebuilding a Home with an Existing Septic System

This guideline helps determine when it is appropriate to use the existing septic system and when it is required to connect to the public sewer. **Sewer pipe cannot cross a neighboring property line when connecting to a public sewer.**

Properties **beyond 200 linear ft.** of a public sewer

Properties with an existing septic system, verified by a qualified licensed contractor* and determined to be **in good working condition** may use the existing septic system if the property is:

Rebuilding Like-For-Like:

- Same number of bedrooms or bedroom equivalents (same location with a possibility of floor plan modification of up to **10%**)
- Fully accommodated by the existing septic system
- All setback requirements are met

Rebuilding as a New construction:

- Equivalent structure with original floor plan, using existing septic system, sized correctly for the number of bedrooms or bedroom equivalents
- Proper distance between the septic system and structures (house, retaining walls, pools, decks, and other features) must meet system components standards

Rebuilding with New/Modified floor plan:

- Proposing additional bedrooms or bedroom equivalents will require Public Health permits for a compatible septic system

*** A qualified licensed contractor holds a valid California Contractors License as Class A, C 42, or C 36.**

Properties with an existing septic system, verified by a qualified licensed contractor* and determined **NOT** to be in good working condition should contact Public Health for guidance on how to bring the septic system back into compliance.

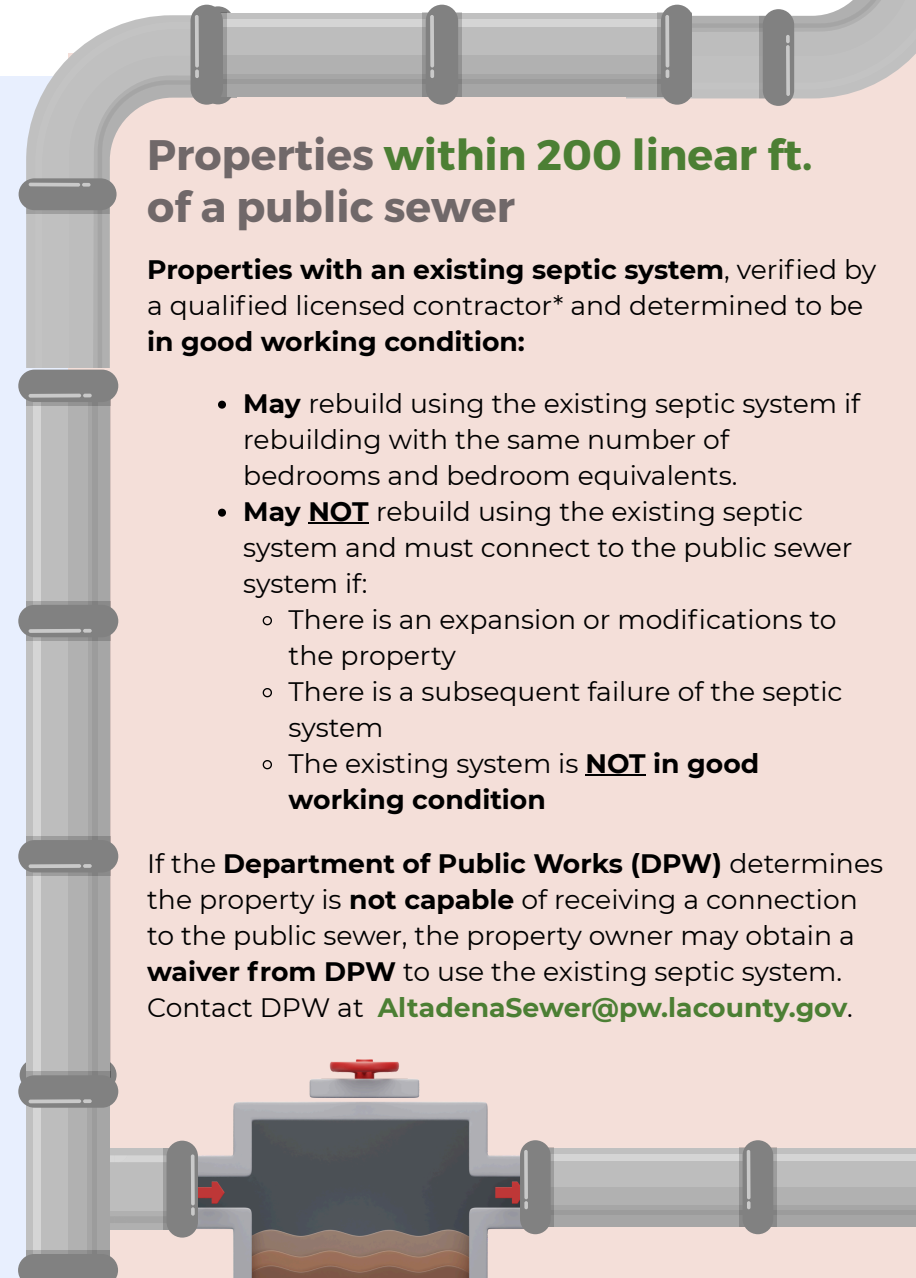
*A septic system that is **NOT** in good working order is considered **failing**. A failing septic system is one that can no longer safely treat or discharge wastewater.*

Properties **within 200 linear ft.** of a public sewer

Properties with an existing septic system, verified by a qualified licensed contractor* and determined to be **in good working condition**:

- **May** rebuild using the existing septic system if rebuilding with the same number of bedrooms and bedroom equivalents.
- **May NOT** rebuild using the existing septic system and must connect to the public sewer system if:
 - There is an expansion or modifications to the property
 - There is a subsequent failure of the septic system
 - The existing system is **NOT in good working condition**

If the **Department of Public Works (DPW)** determines the property is **not capable** of receiving a connection to the public sewer, the property owner may obtain a **waiver from DPW** to use the existing septic system. Contact DPW at AltadenaSewer@pw.lacounty.gov.



For more information, please contact:
Environmental Health, Onsite Wastewater Treatment Program
(626) 430-5380 or dlanduse@ph.lacounty.gov



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

Cesspools

A cesspool is a lined pit that receives and stores sewage directly from the house, without the use of a septic tank. If a property owner wishes to **rebuild** with **additional bedrooms or bedroom equivalents**, the cesspool must be **upgraded** to a **septic system** or **connected to the public sewer** if located within 200 linear ft. Approval must be obtained from Public Health if converting to a septic system.

Guidance for Properties with existing cesspools in the Eaton Fire Burn Area

Use of existing cesspools will be permitted during reconstruction if the following applies:

Functionality Verification:

- Each cesspool must show it works by obtaining a percolation test conducted by a **Qualified Professional (QP)**.
- Testing must follow the procedures outlined in the County of Los Angeles Local Agency Management Program (**LAMP**) and meet the **minimum percolation rate criteria specified in Table 3-2 of the LAMP**.
- The County Department of Public Health will review and approve all test results.

No Increase in Wastewater Flow:

- Property owners may not increase wastewater flow to an existing cesspool.
- There can be no reconstruction that **adds** bedrooms, bathrooms, or bedroom equivalents, such as Accessory Dwelling Units (**ADUs**).
- Reconstruction plans must show the number of previously permitted bedrooms and bathrooms; any changes require prior approval from the Department of Public Health.



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