

**CALIFORNIA REGIONAL WATER QUALITY CONTROL BOARD
LAHONTAN REGION**

**MEETING OF JULY 17, 2013
BARSTOW**

ITEM: 4

SUBJECT: WATER QUALITY CONTROL POLICY FOR SITING, DESIGN, OPERATION, AND MAINTENANCE OF ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEMS

CHRONOLOGY:	<u>Date</u>	<u>Action</u>
	June 12, 2012	The State Water Resources Control Board adopted Resolution No. 2012-0032 that approves the Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) Policy
	May 13, 2013	The OWTS policy became effective

DISCUSSION: The OWTS Policy provides state-wide guidance on how the Water Boards and Local Agencies will proceed with authorizing OWTS. The systems typically are septic tank and leachfield systems or enhanced individual systems that discharge primarily domestic wastewater to the ground. The Policy's procedures reflect a substantial change from the current processes.

The Policy grants a waiver of Waste Discharge Requirements and the need to file a Report of Waste Discharge for existing systems that are not failing and for new and replacement systems that meet the low-risk criteria of the Policy. The Policy contains both tasks and associated timelines requiring actions by the Water Boards and Local Agencies for those OWTS that do not meet the low-risk criteria. The Policy requires Local Agencies that wish to continue to permit OWTS that do not meet the low-risk criteria to produce Local Agency Management Programs (LAMPs) for Water Board approval. The Water Boards may also issue Waste Discharge Requirements for OWTS that are not low-risk. Existing Local Agency and Water Board programs for OWTS continue in place until either a LAMP is approved or five years from the Policy effective date, whichever comes first.

State Water Board staff will present the Policy to the Lahontan Water Board and answer any questions.

RECOMMENDATION: This is an informational item only. Water Board members may provide direction to staff.

ENCLOSURE	Item	Bates Number
1	OWTS Policy Fact Sheet	4-5

ENCLOSURE 1

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Water Quality Control Policy for Siting, Design, Operation and Maintenance of Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS Policy)

General OWTS Policy Information

What are we regulating?

- Onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) that primarily treat domestic wastewater and employ subsurface disposal.
- Systems may serve individual or community wastewater needs.
- There are an estimated 1.2 million OWTS in California

When does it take effect?

- The effective date of the Policy is 13 May 2013.
- Except for Tier 3, local agencies may continue to implement their existing OWTS permitting programs for 60 months after the effective date of the Policy. Owners of OWTS not in compliance with Section 2.6 of the Policy shall notify the Regional Water Boards by submitting a Report of Waste Discharge

Why was the Policy adopted?

- Assembly Bill 885 amended California Water Code section 13290, which required the State Water Board to develop statewide standards or regulations for permitting and operation of OWTS.

Who is impacted?

- OWTS owners
- Local agencies that permit OWTS (county environmental health dept., etc.)
- Regional Water Boards
- State Water Board

OWTS Policy Tiers

The OWTS Policy establishes a statewide, risk-based, tiered approach for regulation and management of OWTS installations and replacements, and recognizes the effectiveness of local permitting agencies. Tiers are briefly summarized below, refer to the OWTS Policy for a complete discussion of the requirements.

Tier 0 – Existing OWTS (Section 6)

- Applies to properly functioning systems that do not need corrective action.
- Not subject to TMDL Implementation program, special provisions, or located within 600 feet of a water body listed on OWTS Policy Attachment 2.
- Maximum flow rate is 10,000 gallons per day.

Tier 1 – Low Risk New or Replacement OWTS (Sections 7 & 8)

- Applies to new or replacement OWTS that comply with conservative siting and design standards described in the OWTS Policy.
- Tier 1 applies when a Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) has not been approved by the Regional Water Board
- Maximum flow rate is 3,500 gallons per day.

Tier 2 – Local Agency Management Program (LAMP) for New or Replacement OWTS (Section 9)

- Applies to new or replacement OWTS that comply with the siting and design standards in an approved LAMP. LAMPs are developed by Local Agencies based on local conditions; siting and design standards may differ from Tier 1 standards.
- Maximum flow rate is 10,000 gallons per day.

Tier 3 – Advanced Protection Management Program (Section 10)

- Applies to OWTS located near impaired water bodies that are subject to a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation plan, a special provision contained in a LAMP, or is located within 600 feet of a water body listed on OWTS Attachment 2.
- Supplemental treatment requirements may apply to a Tier 3 system.
- Maximum flow rate is 10,000 gallons per day.

Tier 4 – OWTS Requiring Corrective Action (Section 11)

- Applies to systems that are not properly functioning (failing).
- Failure may be indicated by surfacing effluent, wastewater backing up in plumbing fixtures, OWTS component/piping structural failure, or significant groundwater or surface water degradation.

The Policy and Substitute Environmental Document are available on the Internet at: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/owts/index.shtml

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