



INFORMATION BULLETIN / PUBLIC - BUILDING CODE - REUSE OF EXISTING SEPTIC SYSTEMS WHEN REBUILDING ONE- AND TWO- FAMILY DWELLINGS DAMAGED BY THE 2025 WILDFIRES			
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City of Los Angeles – Department of Building & Safety

REUSE OF EXISTING SEPTIC SYSTEMS WHEN REBUILDING ONE- AND TWO- FAMILY DWELLINGS DAMAGED BY THE 2025 WILDFIRES

PURPOSE

This Information Bulletin is intended to provide information regarding the reuse of existing septic systems when rebuilding a 1- or 2- family dwelling damaged or destroyed by the 2025 Wildfires.

Homes that were damaged or destroyed by the 2025 Wildfires may reuse their existing Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS) regardless of their distance to the public sewer.

A. WHEN CAN AN EXISTING SEPTIC SYSTEM BE REUSED?

- a. An existing septic system can remain in use for the rebuild of a 1- or 2-family dwelling damaged or destroyed by the 2025 Wildfires when all of the following apply:
 - i. The existing onsite treatment system was permitted;
 - ii. The same number of bedrooms, or less, as the prior permitted dwelling, except as provided in section B of this Information Bulletin;
 - iii. No increase in wastewater design flow compared to the prior permitted dwelling, except as provided in section B of this Information Bulletin;
 - iv. No additional dwelling unit unless separately evaluated;
 - v. The Septic System is functional, including but not limited to the following criteria as verified by an evaluation report of the existing OWTS prepared by a Qualified Contractor or Qualified Professional and submitted to the LADBS Grading division for approval.
 - 1. Show no signs of failure (e.g., surfacing sewage or backups);
 - 2. Have an intact tank and disposal field;
 - 3. Be capable of continued operation;
 - 4. A permit and inspection by the LADBS Grading division will be required to verify conditions; and
 - 5. The rebuild does not disturb or encroach upon the Septic System.
 - vi. Required setbacks from the structure to the septic system shall be maintained in accordance with the California Plumbing Code Table H101.8; and
 - vii. Grading or reconstruction shall not compromise the disposal field.

B. REUSE OF AN ONSITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM WHEN ADDING BEDROOMS OR INCREASING THE WASTEWATER

The existing OWTS is permitted to remain when adding bedrooms or increasing the wastewater if it can be demonstrated that the existing system can handle the additional flow. A grading permit will be required along with an evaluation report of the existing OWTS prepared by a Qualified Contractor or Qualified Professional and submitted to the LADBS Grading division for approval.

C. REQUIRED CLEARANCE

During the building (structural) plan check process, the plan check engineer will issue a "Sewer Availability" clearance to the Bureau of Engineering (BOE). BOE will note in the permitting system that the dwelling is using a previously existing onsite sewer treatment system.

When the building (structural) plan check staff reviews the BOE notes, they will add a Private Sewage Disposal System clearance for LADBS Grading section.

D. GRADING PERMIT

A grading permit will be required along with an evaluation report of the existing OWTS prepared by a Qualified Contractor or Qualified Professional and submitted to the LADBS Grading division for approval.

E. DEFINITIONS

Qualified Contractor (QC). An individual who possesses a valid California License as General Engineering Contractor (Class A), General Building Contractor (Class B), Sanitation System Contractor (Specialty Class C-42), or Plumbing Contractor (Specialty Class C-36). The qualifying contractor under this definition may perform all work related to installation of new and replacement OWTS, and repair of existing OWTS in accordance with California Business and Professions Code and Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations.

Qualified Professional (QP). A person who is a licensed California Professional Geologist, a California Certified Engineering Geologist, a California Certified Hydrogeologist, a California Registered Professional Engineer, a California Registered Professional Geotechnical Engineer, or a California Registered Environmental Health Specialist. An individual must have at least one of these licenses to perform a Site Evaluation.

F. REFERENCES

- [Rebuilding a Home with an Existing Septic System \[OCA Approved 4.24.25\]](#) - This County of LA document is for reference only. The cited contacts will not apply in Los Angeles City.
- Additional information regarding a site evaluation report as well as other relevant information can be found in Information Bulletin [P/BC 2026-027](#).