

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott
Governor

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State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

Aerobic Treatment Unit Operations and Maintenance Program Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is an aerobic treatment unit (ATU)?

A: A component of a septic system that utilizes a compressor/motor to deliver oxygen to properly treat waste. The aerobic treatment unit is also known as an “aerator”. The system achieves enhanced sewage treatment by promoting aerobic bacteria growth through the introduction of oxygen into the treatment receptacle.

Q: Do aerobic treatment units require an operating permit?

A: Yes. An operating permit must be obtained prior to the use of any aerobic treatment unit. The operating permit for an aerobic treatment unit is valid for 2 years from the date of issuance and must be renewed every 2 years as per Chapter 381.0065(4), Florida Statute (F.S.). The fee for an ATU Operating Permit is \$150.00.

Q: When did this regulation begin?

A: 1986

Q: How do I pay for my operating permit?

A: The owner of an aerobic treatment unit system shall obtain a system operating permit as per Chapter 381.0065(4)(u)4. The department invoices the home owner two months prior to operating permit expirations. Homeowners can pay the department directly or contact their maintenance entity to inquire about including the fee with their service contract. The Maintenance Entity will then forward the payment to the department.

Q: Does the Health Department provide any services for this fee?

A: Yes. A one-time per year inspection is conducted on each ATU per Florida Statute requirements. The department manages all ATUs in the county, investigates public health related complaints, and provides Septic Contractor trainings.

Q: Who is required to have a service contract?

A: The owner of an aerobic treatment unit system shall maintain a current maintenance service agreement with an aerobic treatment unit maintenance entity permitted by the department. The property owner may perform maintenance to their owner-occupied single family residence system if they have been approved by the ATU manufacturer to service their system and have applied to this department to become an approved maintenance entity. The maintenance entity shall inspect each aerobic treatment unit system at least twice each year as per Chapter 381.0065(4)(u)1, F.S.

Q: Why is a service contract necessary?

A: These systems are highly mechanical and require regular maintenance to function properly. Without proper maintenance your system may fail. A failing system may release raw sewage, which is known to spread disease. Having a service contract with a service provider means your system will receive proper maintenance.

Florida Department of Health

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Q: How long must I have a service contract for?

A: A contract must be maintained for the life of the system. The initial service contract must be for a term of no less than two years. All subsequent contracts must be a minimum of one year.

Q: How do I obtain a service contract?

A: Contact a Registered Service Provider who services your type of system. A list of service providers can be found on our website www.brevardeh.com. Only contact companies that are licensed to service your specific unit. You may also call 321-633-2100 to have a copy mailed to you.

Q: Can a homeowner be approved to maintain the ATU or PBTS at their owner-occupied residence?

A: Yes. The property owner of an owner-occupied, single-family residence may be approved and permitted by the department as a maintenance entity for his or her own aerobic treatment unit system upon written certification from the system manufacturer's approved representative that the property owner has received training on the proper installation and service of the system. The maintenance entity service agreement must conspicuously disclose that the property owner has the right to maintain his or her own system and is exempt from contractor registration requirements for performing construction, maintenance, or repairs on the system but is subject to all permitting requirements. They must submit an application and \$25 fee and be issued a maintenance entity service permit by the department.

Q: Why do I have to have an operating permit when none of my neighbors do?

A: When the original application for septic system construction for your residence was received, the property failed to meet the requirements necessary for a standard septic system, and was therefore denied. In the overwhelming majority of these cases, the denial was based on Chapter 46-69 Brevard County Code of Ordinances density restrictions. This includes lots less than ½ acre in size on a block where public water was not available to all homes on the block and the build-out density had already reached 30%. In those cases, the applicant was able to apply for a local variance wherein they agreed to install an aerobic unit in order to receive a septic construction permit.

Q: How do I know my Service Provider is servicing my unit?

A: Service Providers may place a service notification sticker on your unit or leave a service report or door hanger each time an inspection is completed. You can request to be notified before your service inspection is completed. The Service Provider is required to submit their service reports to the department on a quarterly basis. Some service providers submit their service reports electronically and can be viewed at www.septicsearch.com.

Q: What are the Service Providers supposed to be checking?

A: This is specific to the brand of aerobic treatment unit and is stated in the service manual for the unit. It is important that mechanical components in the ATU receive regular inspection and maintenance. Some units have filters that filter the wastewater so these will need cleaning or changing. Some compressors may have filters that need changing. Service Providers should ensure that lids are properly fastened and check the unit for damage.

Q: What are some other reasons an ATU would be installed on a property?

A: Some property owners choose to install an ATU for enhanced environmental protection or to make the most efficient use of their property (for example, lowering the floor elevation of their home to reduce the expense of pad fill, or drainfield size reduction to allow for other property features such as swimming pools, etc). Some properties are required to install an ATU based upon county ordinances related to more restrictive surface water body setbacks around environmentally sensitive lands.