

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
FIELD OPERATIONS DIVISION

LIQUID WASTE PROGRAM

GUIDANCE NUMBER 12: Photographic Inspection by Contractor.

I. PURPOSE:

This guidance establishes requirements to be met by contractors providing photographs of newly installed liquid waste systems in lieu of inspections by NMED personnel.

II. APPLICABILITY:

This guidance applies to photographic evidence of compliance with liquid waste regulations pertaining to new construction as allowed in 20.7.3.203, NMAC.

III. GENERAL:

In cases, when it is not possible for NMED staff to perform the inspection(s) of newly constructed liquid waste systems, permission may be given by NMED staff to the contractor to submit photographs that adequately depict the installation in lieu of an inspection by NMED staff. NMED staff may then use the photographs to assess the regulatory compliance of the system.

IV. GUIDANCE STATEMENT:

Section 20.7.3.203 states:

20.7.3.203 PROCEDURES; INSPECTIONS AND TESTING:

A. The department may perform site inspections prior to making a decision on a permit application or variance petition, during construction or modification of the system and after completion of the system. The department may require test holes to be excavated and documentation to be provided for purposes of determining soil types, depth of soil and water table depths. The department may collect samples of soil, liquid waste and water, including water from wells, to determine compliance with 20.7.3 NMAC.

B. Upon granting the permit or variance application, if the department determines an inspection is necessary, the department shall indicate the point in the construction process where the first construction inspection is to be scheduled or in accordance with Subparagraph A of this section.

(1) The person doing the work authorized by the permit shall notify the department to schedule an inspection, orally or in writing, a minimum of 2 working days prior to the inspection. The department may assess a re-inspection fee if the work is not ready for inspection at the time of the scheduled inspection. In the event the inspection is not conducted within one hour after the appointed time of inspection, the contractor shall take photographs that accurately identify the site and features of the installation and proceed with the installation. Copies of such photographs shall be submitted to the department.

Therefore, it is up to the discretion of NMED to require, or not require, an inspection of a newly constructed or modified liquid waste system before granting final approval of the permit. In some cases, it may not be possible for NMED staff to perform the inspection. In cases where it is not possible for NMED staff to perform the inspection, photographs of the installation or modification must be provided by the contractor. In no cases should photographs be substituted for NMED inspection on homeowner installations or advanced treatment unit installations.

When photographs are allowed in place of NMED inspection, all photographs must be submitted, along with the attached NMED transmittal form, Installer Check List for Photo Inspections. Each submitted photograph must be clearly labeled with the date taken, liquid waste permit number, contractor and initials of photographer. Minimum items to be included in the photos:

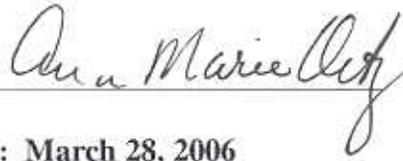
1. Lot Perspective – This photo should include the system and any buildings, trees, wells, well houses, landmarks when present. Photos should include a person or device that will show relative dimension.
2. Building Sewer Perspective – This photo should include the pipe and cleanouts.
3. Tank Perspective – This photo should include a view of the tank with the covers removed and any risers present.
4. Tank Sides – This series of photos should include all four (4) sides of the outside of the tank.
5. Demonstration that Tank is Level – Close up photos of a level, showing the “bubble” to demonstrate that the tank is level.
6. Disposal system - Perspective – This photo should include a view of drain field, include distribution box or tees, spoil pile, etc. The photo collection should include an adequate number of photos to show each leach line, “dog legs”, tees, etc. These photos should show aggregate size and depth, and cover used over the aggregate. Photos should include a measuring tape, ruler or other object that will show relative size, including pipe diameter.
7. Other Tank Perspective – This photo should include any holding, surge, and/or pump tanks, switches, alarms, manholes, risers, etc.
8. Photo inspections should contain the following disclaimer: “This is a photo inspection and is limited to those items clearly observed in the photos. Approval of the system is based on these observations and should not be construed as a comprehensive inspection and approval.”

9. If the contractor fails to submit the required photos or the photos are not adequate to determine all necessary aspects of the installation, the permit must be denied or canceled as appropriate until such time as the whole system can be exposed and inspected by department personnel.

NMED staff must carefully examine all photographs to ensure that all required photographs are included, they adequately depict the installation, and that the depiction of the system reflects compliance with all requirements of the permit, before granting final approval of the permit.

V. APPROVAL:

Approved by FOD Director



VI. EFFECTIVE DATE: March 28, 2006

Installer Check List for Photo Inspections

This form must be submitted with photos

Photo Inspections are to be used by NMED Consent **Only**

System Owner's Name _____ NMED Permit

No.: _____

System

Location: _____

Installer's Name &

Company: _____

Date Pictures Taken _____

1. BUILDING SEWER, if present at the time of inspection
 - a. ___ Photo Showing Pipe Size, Cleanouts

2. SEPTIC TANK
 - a. ___ Photo Showing Tank Full of Water
 - b. ___ Photo Showing Tank Certification, and Size
 - c. ___ Photos Showing Sides of Tank
 - d. ___ Photos Showing Tank Tees and or baffles
 - e. ___ Photo Showing Bituminous Coating
 - f. ___ Photo Showing 10' Setback (solid pipe) From Disposal Field

3. TEE OR DISTRIBUTION BOX
 - a. ___ Photo Showing Proper Diameter Pipe
 - b. ___ Distribution Box Photo Showing Bituminous Coating
 - c. ___ Photo Showing 5' Setback (solid pipe) From Disposal Field

4. DISPOSAL TRENCH OR BED
 - a. ___ Photos Showing All of the Disposal Area, include something for perspective
 - b. ___ Photos Showing Aggregate Depth
 - c. ___ Photos Showing Aggregate and Aggregate Covering
 - d. ___ Photo Showing The Disposal Field Spoils Pile

5. OTHER PICTURES
 - a. ___ Lot Perspective, include, if present, any buildings, trees, wells, well houses, landmarks, water courses.

If photos are not taken, the permit will be denied or canceled as appropriate until such time as the entire liquid waste system can be exposed and inspected by department personnel.