

## **Time of Transfer Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q. What is required at the time of transfer for septic systems?**

A. The septic tank must be uncovered and pumped out by a licensed septic tank pumper so a certified septic inspector may verify the size and condition of the septic tank. Also, verification of secondary treatment (leech field, lateral field, ATU, peat filter, etc) following the septic tank is required. If the house was built or the system was installed after 1989, a record search for a permit on the system may be useful or done by an inspector. If our office has a permit on file, the septic tank will still need to be inspected. The inspector will also walk the lateral field and look for signs of failure. If no permit exists, the inspector will still inspect the existing septic tank and look for a surface discharge. The inspector will also be inspecting the plumbing inside the house.

### **Q. What constitutes a lateral field?**

A. A series of perforated pipes in varying lengths which do not discharge to the ground surface.

-There is no such thing as a surface discharge from a tank, i.e. into a ditch, tile or stream being grandfathered. These are illegal and a new system will need to be installed.

- If there are no records of a lateral field and no signs of a surface discharge further verification shall be required. Scheduling use of a backhoe may be required.

### **Q. What if the septic system does not meet the code requirements?**

A. A properly sized septic tank and/or a lateral field will need to be installed.

### **Q. Who is responsible for the inspection and upgrades?**

A. The Cerro Gordo County Ordinance is written so that at time of transfer the seller is responsible for having the inspection completed.

### **Q. What is this going to cost?**

A. Most septic tanks will cost \$200-\$250 to pump, as it is based on the size of the tank and individual pumpers. If the septic tank needs to be unearthed, a backhoe will cost \$75-\$150/hour. These fees are only estimates and not intended to be used for financial planning purposes. Cerro Gordo County is not responsible if the contractor charges a higher rate. The fee for a time of transfer inspection varies, depending on each Certified Time of Sale Inspector. Systems that fail the inspection will be required to obtain a septic permit for installing a new system. If the new system is installed in six months no additional permit fee is required. However, if the system is not installed within six months, an additional \$150 permit fee is required.

### **Q. If a system is pumped, inspected, and passed, but fails a short time later what happens?**

A. This program is intended to find illegal discharges and to provide education to new homeowners. The inspection offers a one-time glimpse of the septic system and it is impossible

to determine when or if the system will fail. We, in good faith, provide the parties with useful information regarding the septic system.