



Health Department  
& Home Health Agency

*"Healthy living in a healthy community."*

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Water is a valuable resource that is not renewable. It has an influence on our daily lives and most people do not know where their water comes from. Most only know that when they turn on the water faucet they expect water to come out and that it is safe. The steps to get safe drinking water are phenomenal, and keeping the water safe does not occur over night. This is the same for groundwater contamination. A trickle of pollution will have a lifetime effect if not corrected.

The Reno County Environmental Health Section is dedicated to ground water protection and enforces the Reno County Sanitation Code. This code requires that all private wells and wastewater systems be permitted in the county and the licensing of wastewater contractors and sanitary service pumpers.

Our primary goal is ground water protection as the county has sandy soils, perched water tables, shallow ground water (as close as 4foot), and is located over two very sensitive aquifers from which we all obtain our drinking water. This Environmental section was started in 1989 and was partially funded by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) with the Local Environmental Protection Plan funds. Funds were grant funds from KDHE. This section is also funded by the tax dollars and permit fees. As of July 1<sup>st</sup> this section no longer receives grant funds from KDHE. Last year the grant amount received from KDHE was \$17,774.00. The program has an income of \$20,100.00 obtained from permit and license fees with expenses of \$74,576.00 in 2011.

Environmental Health Section stats:

- Avg. of 49 field visits/ month
- Avg. 1,348 miles per month
- 1 full time environmental coordinator, 1.2 environmental health staff and a .375 part time clerk.
- 6 licensed pumpers, 11 pump trucks inspected
- 22 licensed contractors
- 70 wastewater permits and 25 water well permits issued in 2011
- 44 well final inspections and 86 wastewater final inspections
- 889 Wastewater consults and 252 water well consults
- 317 Mortgage inspection consultations
- 854 properties were handled
- 13 cost share properties (We work closely with the Soil Conservation District that assists home owners with cost-share money in the replacement of failing wastewater systems.)

Current license fees were established in 2003 when the latest version of the sanitation code was adopted. Fees are used to supplement and maintain the program. For example, the permit fee for

the installation of a wastewater system was \$90.00 and since the loss of the grant funds from LEPP, as of Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>, that fee is now \$275.00 and we have a trip charge of \$50.00 that is applied starting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> site visit. Fee increases were a last resort as we had already cut staff time when we lost the LEPP funds. However, our commissioners felt the section and the code is important to Reno County and raising permit and license fees was the only alternative, since more tax dollars to support the program was not a possibility. The current fees are to cover staff time and maintenance expenses for vehicles, and equipment. The current fees are not to make a profit. We were able to keep fees inexpensive for the public until the grant funds were cut.

A decrease has occurred in the amount of new applications for wastewater and wells in the month of Sept. compared to previous years. The economy could have some factor on this also but the increased fees does not help in a county that has an average house hold income of \$41,000.00 compared to the state average of \$49,424.00

New wastewater systems can cost anywhere from \$5500.00 to \$15,000.00. I realize that the permit fee of \$275.00 is minor when compared to the above cost, but that is the charge just to get us on site for an evaluation, before anything is figured out of what can and cannot be done. This fee increase may result in more systems being installed incorrectly and not adequately sized.

Again, if the toilet flushes or waste goes down the drain that is as far as most people think. Wastewater systems can serve as a pollution source for groundwater. This is why proper placement, sizing, and distribution of a wastewater system is crucial for ground water protection. According to the EPA onsite wastewater manual the average nitrate effluent of a home wastewater system is 40 mg/L. This concentration of 40mg/l is not recommended for livestock to drink and especially not for human consumption. Even levels of 20-40mg/l may pose a risk to some livestock and human. So knowing this information think about how a wastewater system works. Human and house waste goes into a septic tank and as the tank fills it goes out in the laterals and then into the soil and may eventually leach into the ground water. Proper placement and sizing is vital. Reno County also has a requirement that lots smaller than 3.0acres have an enhanced treatment wastewater system. This enhanced system has the capability to reduce nitrates to lower than state drinking water standards. The KDHE and EPA standard for drinking water is 10mg/l.

Returning the money back to the counties is a role that legislators must consider. This money assist counties in being fully staffed, purchasing proper equipment, and keeping fees low for the public.

Also enclosed are groundwater maps reflecting that Reno county is in a groundwater sensitive area and protection is needed.

Below is a listing of the former and current fees.

<b>SERVICE</b>	<b>Former FEES</b>	<b>Current FEES</b>
Mortgage Inspection Wastewater Only	\$60	\$200
Mortgage Inspection Well Only	\$85	\$200
Mortgage Inspection Both Systems	\$100	\$200
Sanitary Service License	\$35	\$35
Sanitary Service Vehicle Inspection	\$15 per vehicle	\$35 per vehicle
Wastewater Contractor License - County Wide	\$100	\$100
Wastewater Contractor License - Homeowner	\$15	\$30
Application For Private Water Well Permit	\$60	\$175
Application For Private Water Well Permit - Late	\$120	\$350
Application For Semi Public Water Well Permit	\$125	\$175
Application For Semi Public Water Well Permit - Late	\$250	\$350
Application For Private Wastewater Permit	\$90	\$275
Application For Private Wastewater Permit - Late	\$180	\$550
Application For Semi Public Wastewater Permit	\$90	\$275
Application For Semi Public Wastewater Permit - Late	\$180	\$550
Trip Charge – starting with the 3 <sup>rd</sup> trip and there after	\$0	\$50 per trip

Thank you for your time and listening to me today. I ask you to restore the LEPP funds so that local governments can still protect and maintain our statewide water resource that is as precious as the air we breathe.



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