



On-Site Wastewater Treatment Research Council Fee

This document is for guidance only; it does not take the place of any laws or regulations.

What Is This Fee?

A \$10 fee is charged to all property owners in Texas who apply for a permit to construct on-site sewage facilities (OSSFs) for treatment and disposal of wastewater. (OSSFs are often called “septic systems.”) This fee funds competitive grants for research, demonstration, and technology transfer projects in the field of advanced alternative treatment and disposal technologies. The grant program is run by the On-Site Wastewater Treatment Research Council. Legal authority for the fee comes from Section 367.010 of the Texas Health and Safety Code.

How Is This Fee Assessed and Collected?

Initial Collection by Local Authorities. The fee is collected by local permitting authorities across the state—for example, county health departments—when property owners apply for permits to construct OSSFs.

Assessments on Local Authorities by the TCEQ. To gather the fee payments for the Research Council, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) provides local authorities with forms for reporting the number of permits issued. To begin the process of gathering this fee, each permitting authority must send the TCEQ a monthly activity report (regardless of the authority’s level of permitting activity). Send the activity report to the TCEQ’s Installer Certification Section (at the address printed near the end of this bulletin).

To help the billing process work smoothly, send the activity report in time to reach the TCEQ by the 7th of each month. At this stage in the process, local authorities should NOT send any payment.

Billing. The Installer Licensing Section collects the monthly activity reports and, at the end of each quarter, runs a computer program that gives the Financial Administration Division the number of OSSF applications processed by each authority. The Financial Administration Division then prepares and mails the bills to local authorities.

What Is the Due Date of the Fees? Where Do I Send the Payment?

The due date is 30 days after the “invoice date” shown on your billing statement; your payment must reach the TCEQ in time to be credited to your account by the due date. Return your payment with the payment coupon (the top portion of the billing statement) to the mailing address shown on the back of the coupon. Use the envelope provided for your convenience. Be sure to turn the coupon over so that TCEQ’s mailing address shows through the envelope’s window.

Tip—to Help You Avoid Late Fees. Send your payment in “good order” (as described in the paragraph above), and mail it **7 to 10 working days before** the due date.

Will I Be Charged Late Fees?

If payment is not received in time to be credited to your account by the due date, the TCEQ will charge penalties and interest, as provided for in Title 30, Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Chapter 12. A penalty of 5 percent of the fee due will be assessed if the fee is not paid by the due date. If not paid within 30 days after the due date, an additional 5 percent penalty will be assessed.

After the bill is 60 days overdue, the TCEQ will assess interest charges until the balance is paid. Effective January 1, 2000, interest will be charged at the variable rate of prime plus 1 percent. The prime rate for the calendar year is the prime rate published in the *Wall Street Journal* on the first business day of the calendar year.

Limit on Retroactive Charges. Late charges will not be applied retroactively to outstanding fees assessed before March 1, 1997.

What If I Think the Billing Is Incorrect?

If you want to dispute the amount of your fee, you must do so in writing. The TCEQ may not adjust the amount due if your request for adjustment is **received** more than one year after the date on which the fee was paid in full. You can telephone TCEQ offices to clarify questions you may have

about your fee amount. (For phone numbers, see the heading “Where Do I Send Correspondence or Get More Information?”)

In the correspondence, please provide your account name, account number, and the description of the suspected error.

Why Do I Have to Return the Coupon with My Payment?

The payment coupon (the top portion of your bill) contains an optical character reader (OCR) line. When we receive your payment, a computer reads your account number from that OCR line. Automated processing allows the agency to keep up with the large number of transactions handled. Without the coupon, your transaction cannot be handled by the faster, automated process. Processing “by hand” can be time-consuming (for example, see “If I Have More than One Account ...”), and your account may not be credited in time to avoid late fees.

If I Have More Than One Account, May I Send One Check for the Total Amount?

You may send all your payments in one envelope, but please enclose a separate check for each coupon. If the number of checks does not equal the number of coupons, we won’t know which accounts to credit your payment to. We will not be able to process your transactions by the faster, automated process; instead, we will have to contact you by phone to find out how the payment should be credited. Processing “by hand” can become time-consuming (for example, playing “telephone tag”), and your account may not be credited in time to avoid late fees.

What Does the “FY” Mean on My Statement?

“FY” stands for the TCEQ’s “fiscal year,” which runs from September 1 through August 31. However, the fiscal year is not the billing period for which you are being charged. Each billing statement will include an attachment that shows the period for which you are being billed.

Where Do I Send Correspondence or Get More Information?

About Overall Program Operations. Contact the following office for address changes, contact name changes, monthly report forms, questions about how the fee is assessed and calculated (including suspected calculation errors), or other questions about your on-site wastewater program:

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Compliance Support Division
Installer Licensing Section, MC-178

PO Box 13087
Austin TX 78711-3087
512/239-4799

For Account Balance Information. Call:
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Financial Administration Division, Revenue Section
512/239-0343

For TCEQ rules, publications, and other information:
You can find the official version of TCEQ rules in the Texas Administrative Code on the Secretary of State’s Web site at www.sos.state.tx.us.

Other ways to obtain a copy of the rules, and of TCEQ publications, include the following:

- Go to www.tceq.state.tx.us, and—under the “Site Navigation” bar—follow the links “Forms and Publications” and “Rules, Policy & Legislation.”
- You can also contact the TCEQ Publications Unit at 512/239-0028. Try to give rule, publication, or form *numbers* as well as the title; this information will help the TCEQ staff get the correct item to you as quickly as possible. You may also fax your order to 512/239-4488, or write to TCEQ Publications, MC 195; PO Box 13087; Austin, TX 78711-3087.

Texas Natural Resource
Conservation Commission

**Texas Commission
on Environmental Quality**

**Same Agency, New Name!
(on Sept. 1, 2002)**

www.tceq.state.tx.us/name_change.html