

# Seasonal Discharges to Ground

This technical bulletin applies only to seasonal discharges to ground.

Two disposal field systems are required by the Municipal Sewage Regulation for a year-round discharge since each field must be rested periodically.

The purpose of this technical bulletin is to acknowledge that, for seasonal discharges, a single disposal field operated with a period of non-use may be an acceptable alternative.

In order to be considered as providing an equivalent level of service as a two-disposal-field system operated continuously, the single-field system should meet the following criteria:

- the single field is not used for a period of at least 183 consecutive days in any 365 day period, unless extended season status has been obtained in writing from a regional manager;
- the conditions of this technical bulletin are met; and
- the discharger has obtained written confirmation, from a regional manager

## Definitions

*Environmental impact study*: an environmental impact study as required by the Municipal Sewage Regulation.

*Extended season status*: that the installed field has been sufficiently enlarged to accommodate the discharge for a specified period not exceeding a maximum of 60 additional days beyond the 182 days stipulated for seasonal discharges.

*Operating plan*: an operating plan as required by the Municipal Sewage Regulation.

*Seasonal discharge*: a discharge that occurs each year during a period not exceeding 182 days in a 365 day period.

## Relationship to Previous Technical Approach

This approach is consistent with previous ministry decisions regarding the issuance of Waste Management Permits for seasonal discharges to ground.

## Conditions for Use of Approach

For seasonal discharges of municipal sewage to ground, the installation of only a single disposal field may be acceptable provided:

1. one disposal field is designed and installed, a second disposal field is designed but not installed, and a third standby field area is held in reserve;

2. all fields are designed, installed or held in reserve in accordance with the Municipal Sewage Regulation;
3. an environmental impact study has been completed which confirms that the single installed field will receive adequate rest such that the minimum unsaturated soil depth specified in Schedule 4 of the Municipal Sewage Regulation is maintained throughout the non-use period;
4. an operating plan has been completed which confirms that the installed field is not to be used during the off-season and that alternative disposal arrangements are made for any sewage generated during the off-season (e.g., holding tanks are available, pit privies are installed, or a separate system is installed for the owner's residence);
5. the discharge is specifically registered under the Municipal Sewage Regulation as seasonal and the period of operation is specified; and
6. all other applicable standards and requirements of the Municipal Sewage Regulation are met.

## Additional Conditions for Extended Season Status

For extended season status, the following conditions must be satisfied:

1. the size of the installed, second and the third standby fields must each be increased by a factor of 10% for each 30 days of intended use beyond 182 days; and
2. all other conditions listed above are met.

## Authority

This approach is based on consideration of Section 1 (2) and (3) of Schedule 7 of the Municipal Sewage Regulation and is authorized in accordance with Conditions 4 or 11, or both, of Schedule 1 of the regulation.

The regional manager must consider each request for use of this approach on an individual basis and the discharger must be in receipt of written confirmation from the regional manager that, in the particular case, the installation of only one field is acceptable.

## Disclaimer

This technical bulletin does not replace the Environmental Management Act or its regulations. It does not list all provisions relating to municipal sewage discharges. If there are differences or omissions in this document, the act and regulations apply. For more information, contact the [Environmental Management Branch](#).