

POWTS Update

March 20th, 2026





Plan Review

- State staff have maintained <15 business day turnaround and typically <10 days for plan reviews in 2025.
- Current staffing levels have allowed:
 - Increased availability in the field.
 - Review of products within the POWTS Program.
 - More thorough plan reviews.

Plan Processing Issues



- Top reasons for holds:
 - Missing information
 - Signatures
 - Requiring onsite – fill/IDRs
 - ISD explanations
 - Petitions - no equivalence
 - Holding tanks (not State review)
 - Needs DNR concurrence

2024 vs 2025

➤ 2024:

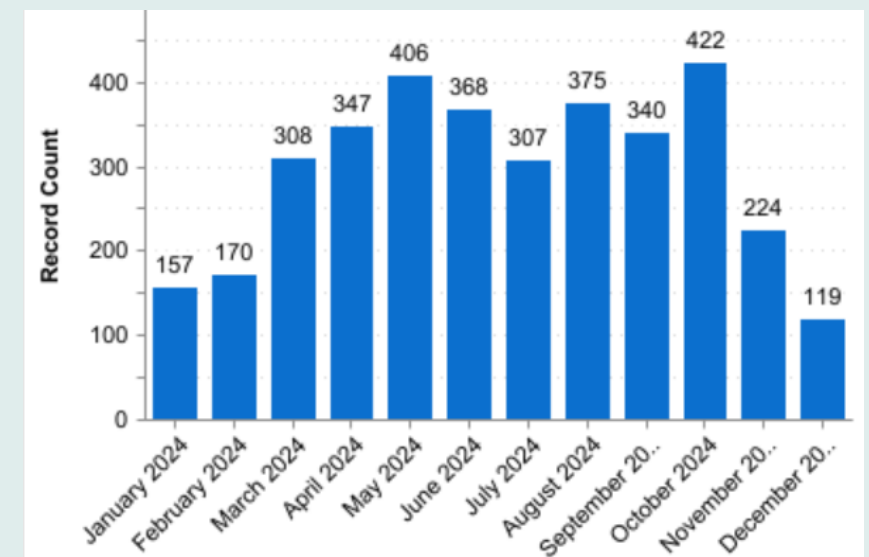
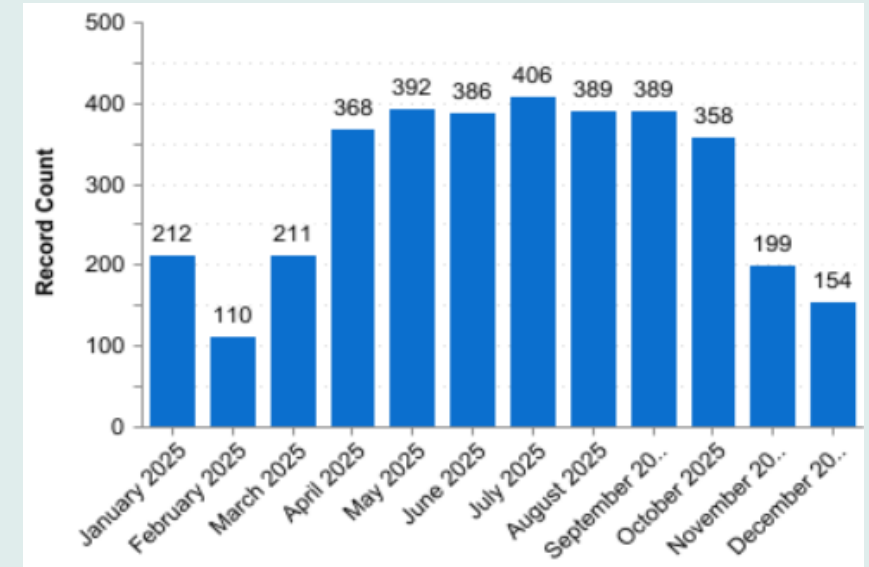
- Saw a significant surge in plans early in the spring.
- Was more “up & down” due to staffing issues.

➤ 2025:

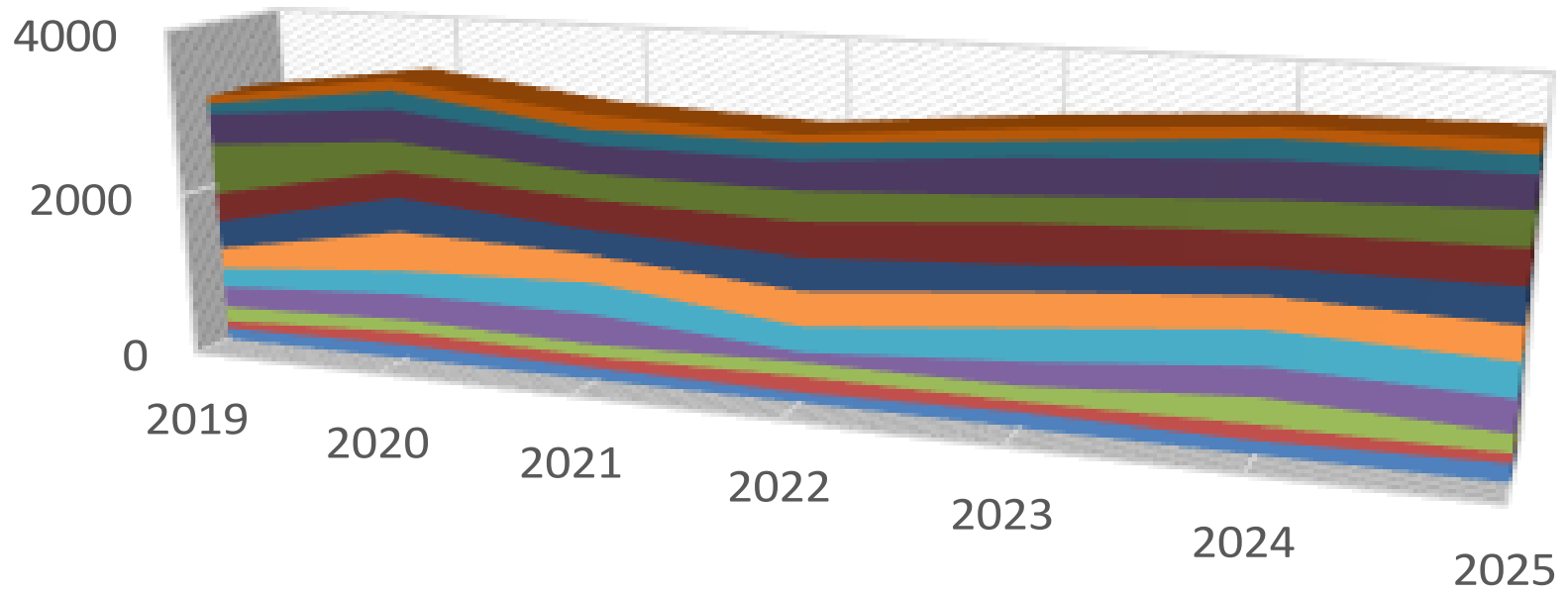
- Surge in January.
- Sustained productivity during the summer.

➤ 3,544 reviews in 2024 vs. 3,574 in 2025.

- Busiest year since 2008.



State Plan Reviews

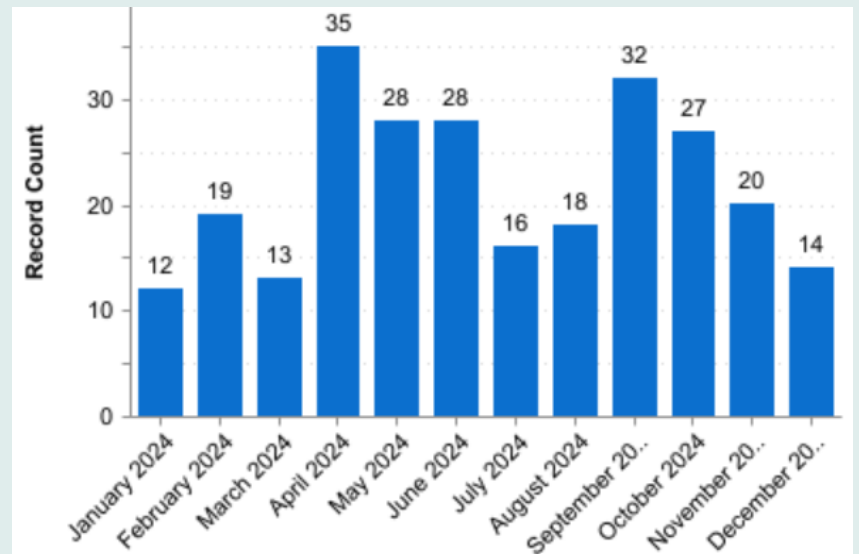
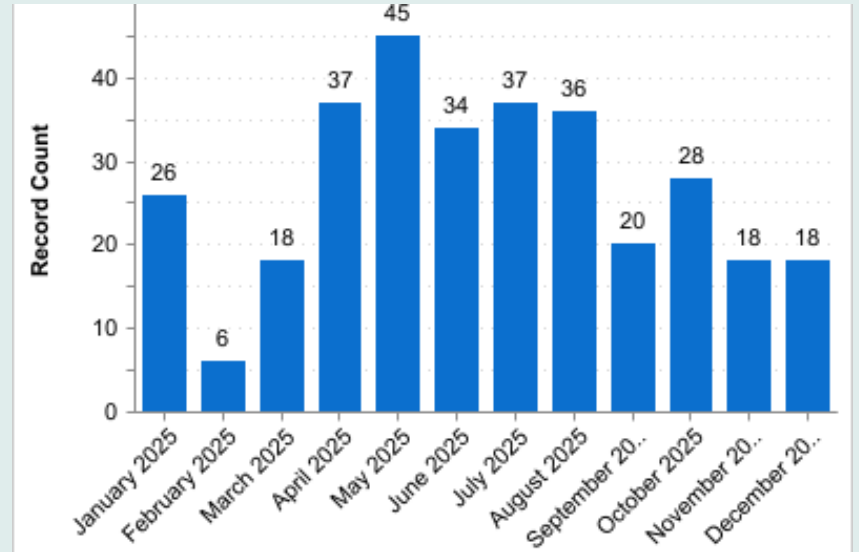


January Feb March April May June
July August Sept Oct Nov Dec

2024 vs 2025

➤ Interpretative Determination Reports

- 262 reviews in 2024 vs 323 reviews in 2025.
- 2025 is a 23% increase over 2024.
- Increase due to more marginal sites being developed and hydrograph suspension.



IDR Reviews

400

300

200

100

0

2023

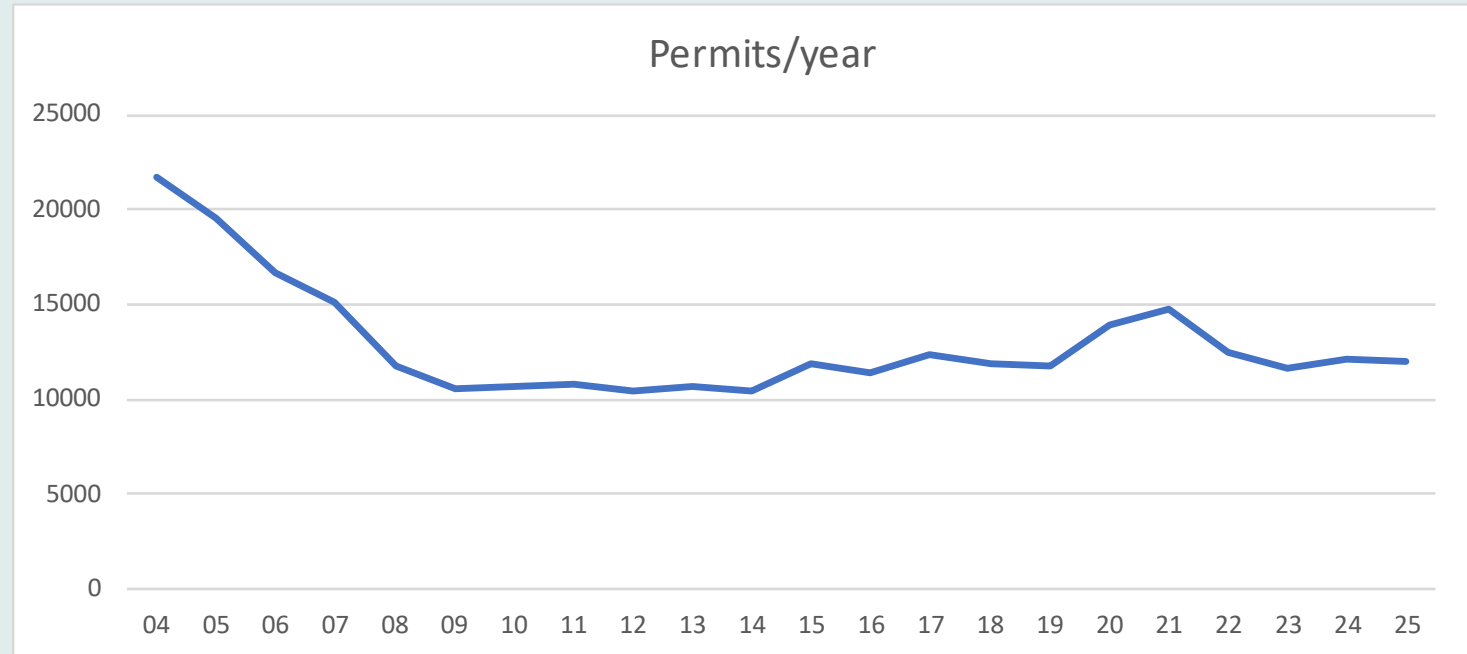
2024

2025



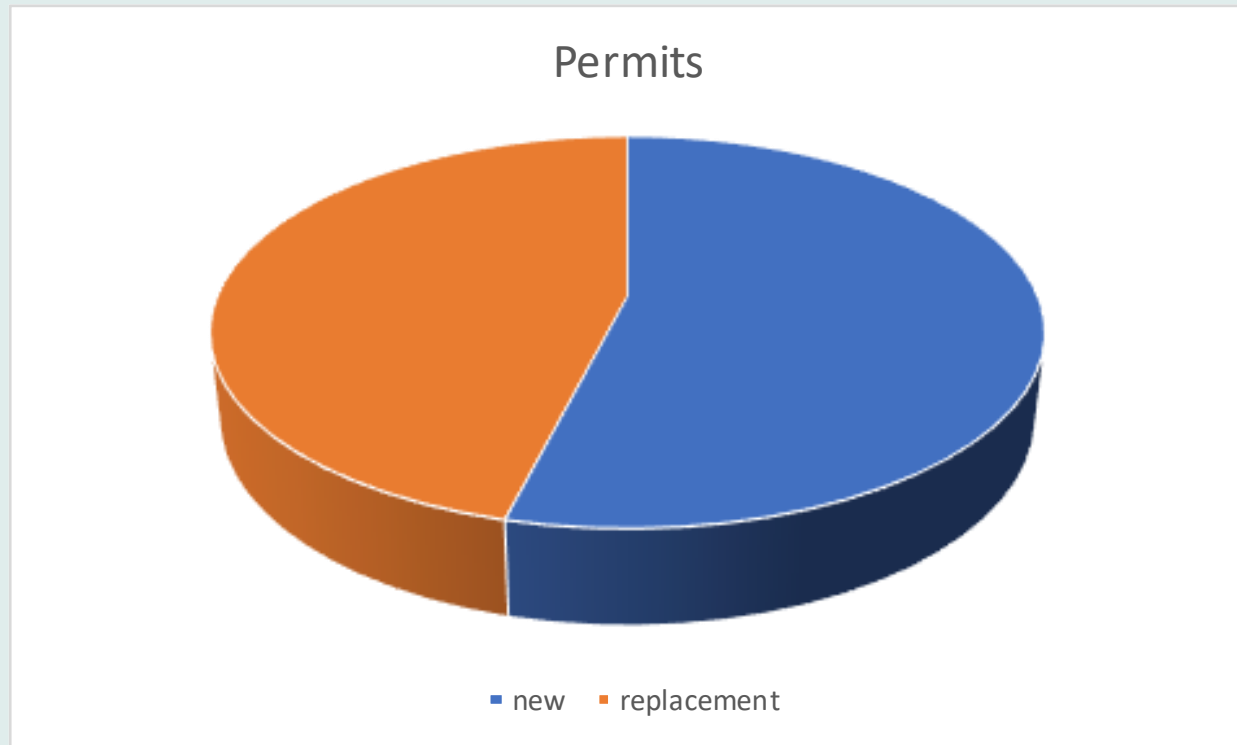
- 12,008 sanitary permits state-wide
- 136 decrease or 1.1% ↓

POWTS Permits



- 54% for new construction
- 46% for replacement

State sanitary
permits





Which county issued the most state sanitary permits in 2025?

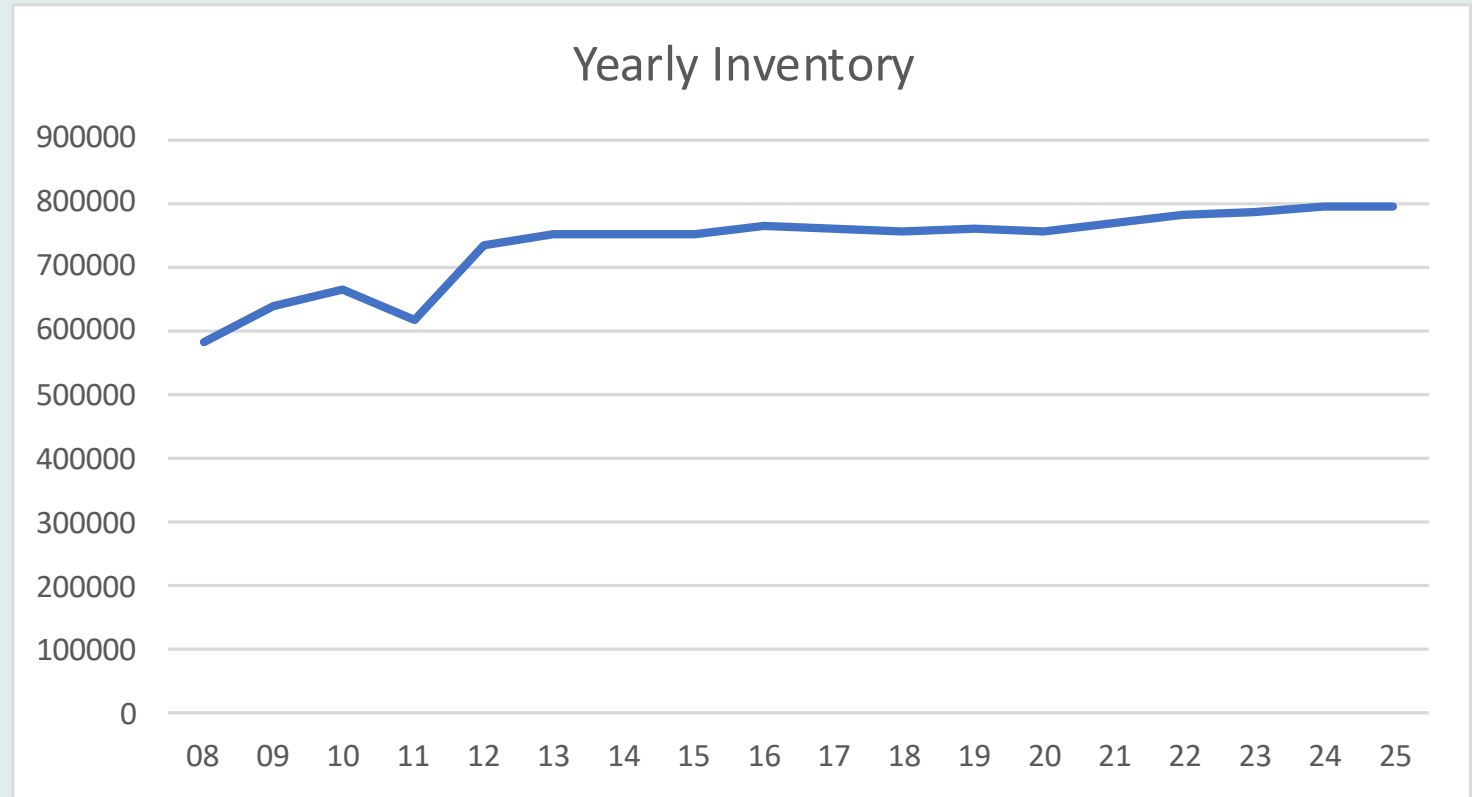
Permits Issued



- 1 – Vilas 491
- 2 – Oneida 425
- 3 – Chippewa 405
- 4 – Waukesha 391
- 5 – Polk 354 ↑4
- 6 – St Croix 353 ↓1
- 7 – Marinette 333 ↓1
- 8 – Sawyer 322
- 9 – Marathon 313 ↓2
- 10 – Oconto 282 ↑2

- 797,166 systems state-wide
- 3,469 increase ↑

POWTS Inventory





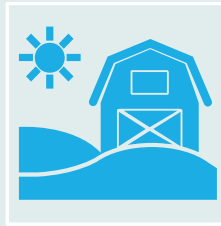
Which county has the largest POWTS inventory?

Systems Inventoried



- 1 – Waukesha 34,284
- 2 – Dane 25,911
- 3 – Oneida 24,870
- 4 – Vilas 23,190
- 5 – Marathon 21,315
- 6 – Washington 21,285
- 7 – Marinette 19,382
- 8 – St Croix 18,358
- 9 – Chippewa 18,232 ↑1
- 10 – Oconto 18,208 ↓1

Industrial Wastewater



DNR has sole authority on industrial wastewater through WPDES permits.

Food manufacturing (**bakery**, meat, dairy, etc.)
Beer & Wine production
Petroleum (vehicle repair, maintenance, washing)
Animal waste
Laundry



DNR must give concurrence on comingled wastewater (domestic and industrial)

A sanitary permit is issued.
Soil based or holding tank

Example: Dog Kennels



- No recommendations on sizing from DSPS for the kennel portion
 - Employees and domestic wastewater - use appendix
 - Water meter readings or other published data
- DNR must give concurrence on comingled wastewater (domestic and industrial)
 - A sanitary permit is issued.
- DNR has sole authority on industrial wastewater (segregated system).
 - No sanitary permit issued.

DSPS & DNR MOU



- DNR halted the drafting process.
- DNR Secretary ended talks with the DNR on updating the MOU.
- Status quo on large scale systems. Previous MOU between Comm. & DNR (1996) is still in effect.
- If you are aware of projects that might be over 12,000 GPD, let us know ASAP.



Hydrograph

- Suspension of procedure April 1, 2024
- Clarification on 07/30/25 that suspension applies to all hydrograph reports.
- Wisconsin Geological & Natural History Survey provided input as to the scope and accuracy of the hydrograph method.
- The TAC recommended indefinite suspension on 08/22/25 until more research can be done. Waiting for next TAC for additional direction.

State Owned Projects

What is the procedure for installing a septic system on state owned property?

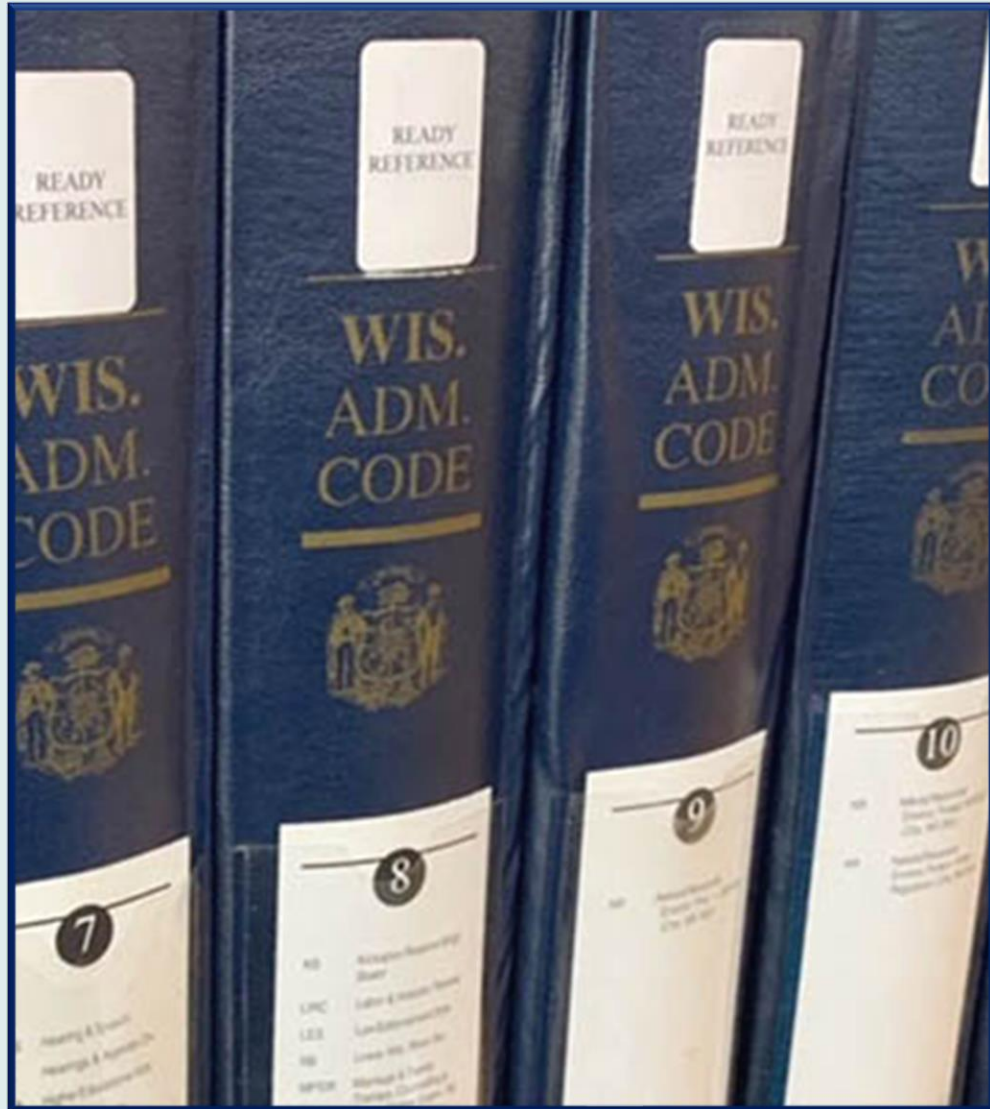
The statutes and code do not differentiate between state and private owned systems. The only exception is that counties do not have jurisdiction, the state does. This means plans, permits and inspections are done by state personnel.





WI Fund

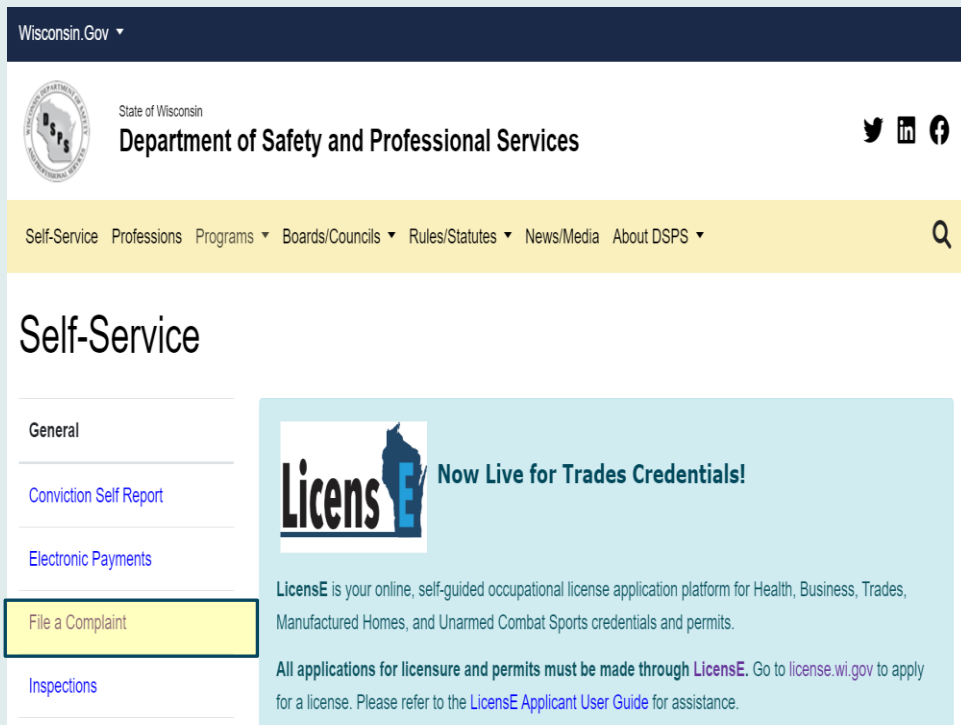
- Was eliminated as per the 2023-2025 budget as of June 30, 2025.
- Last minute attempts to extend the WI Fund were not successful.



WI Fund Language

- Chapter 145.245 contained WI Fund language and was eliminated per 2017 WI Act 59, effective as of June 30, 2025.
- This also removed language enumerating categories of failure under section (4).
- 2017 Act 59 also created chapter 145.01(4m). All categories of failure are now listed as a definition.

Complaints



Wisconsin.Gov ▾

State of Wisconsin
Department of Safety and Professional Services

Self-Service Professions Programs ▾ Boards/Councils ▾ Rules/Statutes ▾ News/Media About DSPS ▾

Self-Service

General

- Conviction Self Report
- Electronic Payments
- File a Complaint**
- Inspections

LicensE Now Live for Trades Credentials!

LicensE is your online, self-guided occupational license application platform for Health, Business, Trades, Manufactured Homes, and Unarmed Combat Sports credentials and permits.

All applications for licensure and permits must be made through LicensE. Go to license.wi.gov to apply for a license. Please refer to the [LicensE Applicant User Guide](#) for assistance.



Remember to utilize the complaint form.



It does matter and is acted upon.



Dozens of trades licenses have had enforcement actions taken last year, including POWTS.

Cold Weather Installations



SPS 383.45



(2) Frozen soil. POWTS treatment and dispersal components consisting in part of in situ soil may not be installed if the soil is frozen at or below the infiltrative surface of the component.



(3) Snow cover. Snow cover shall be removed before excavating or installing POWTS treatment and dispersal components consisting in part of in situ soil.



(4) Moisture. The soil moisture content for a POWTS treatment or dispersal component consisting in part of in situ soil shall be evaluated immediately prior to installation of the component. If the soil at the infiltrative surface can be rolled into a ¼ -inch wire, the installation may not proceed.





FROST PROTECTION

SPS 383.43(8)(c) Frost protection. All POWTS components shall be protected from freezing temperatures that could detrimentally affect component operation to provide wastewater conveyance, treatment or dispersal.

Building Sewers

SPS 382.30(11)(c)

- Discharge to a septic tank, holding tank or grease interceptor must be >18" below finished grade.
- Protect from frost if <60" below grade where snow is cleared.
- Protected from frost if <42" below grade where snow will not be cleared.
- Portion of sewer within 30 feet from the building drain and below grade where snow will not be cleared - no need for frost protection.
- Seasonal public facilities closed from November 15 to March 15 and do not need frost protection.



Insulation Thickness

- Insulation depends on frost zone.
- Type of insulation makes a difference!!!

Table 382.30–5
Minimum Thickness of Insulation

Frost Protection Zone	Extruded Polystyrene Foam (in inches)	Insulating Concrete (in inches)
A	1.0	6
B	1.5	9
C	2.0	12
D	2.5	15

Predicted Depth of Frost

- Based on zone and soil texture(s).

Table 382.30–6

Predicted Depth of Frost in Various Types of Backfill Soil (in feet)

Soil Type	Frost Protection Zone			
	A	B	C	D
Clay, Clay Loam	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0
Silt Loam, Silty Clay Loam	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.5
Sandy Clay Loam	4.0	4.5	5.5	6.0
Sandy Loam, Loamy Sand	4.5	5.0	6.0	6.5
Sand	5.0	5.5	6.5	7.5
Gravelly Sand	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.0

Table 382.30-7
Minimum Width of Extruded Polystyrene Foam Insulation (in feet)

Predicted Depth of Frost (feet)	Depth of Sewer (in feet)					
	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5
2.5	2	NR				
3.0	3	2	NR			
3.5	4	3	2	NR		
4.0	5	4	3	2	NR	
4.5	6	5	4	3	2	NR
5.0	7	6	5	4	3	2
5.5	8	7	6	5	4	3
6.0	9	8	7	6	5	4
6.5	10	9	8	7	6	5
7.0	10	10	9	8	7	6
7.5	10	10	10	9	8	7
8.0	10	10	10	10	9	8
8.5	10	10	10	10	10	9
9.0	10	10	10	10	10	10
10.0	10	10	10	10	10	10

NR means Not Required.

Width of Insulation Needed

- Putting it together:
- Predicted depth of frost + sewer depth = thickness + width of insulation

Building Sewers

Example - Marathon County

- Requires 2" foam board
- Predicted frost at 6.5' in sand
- Requires 5-10' wide foam board

**Table 382.30-5
Minimum Thickness of Insulation**

Frost Protection Zone	Extruded Polystyrene Foam (in inches)	Insulating Concrete (in inches)
A	1.0	6
B	1.5	9
C	2.0	12
D	2.5	15

Predicted Depth of Frost in Various Types of Backfill Soil (in feet)

Soil Type	Frost Protection Zone			
	A	B	C	D
Clay, Clay Loam	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0
Silt Loam, Silty Clay Loam	3.5	4.0	4.5	5.5
Sandy Clay Loam	4.0	4.5	5.5	6.0
Sandy Loam, Loamy Sand	4.5	5.0	6.0	6.5
Sand	5.0	5.5	6.5	7.5
Gravelly Sand	6.0	7.5	9.0	10.0

Minimum Width of Extruded Polystyrene Foam Insulation (in feet)

Predicted Depth of Frost (feet)	Depth of Sewer (in feet)					
	2.0	2.5	3.0	3.5	4.0	4.5
2.5	2	NR				
3.0	3	2	NR			
3.5	4	3	2	NR		
4.0	5	4	3	2	NR	
4.5	6	5	4	3	2	NR
5.0	7	6	5	4	3	2
5.5	8	7	6	5	4	3
6.0	9	8	7	6	5	4
6.5	10	9	8	7	6	5
7.0	10	10	9	8	7	6
7.5	10	10	10	9	8	7
8.0	10	10	10	10	9	8
8.5	10	10	10	10	10	9
9.0	10	10	10	10	10	10
10.0	10	10	10	10	10	10

NR means Not Required.

Other Methods

There are other ways to insulate!

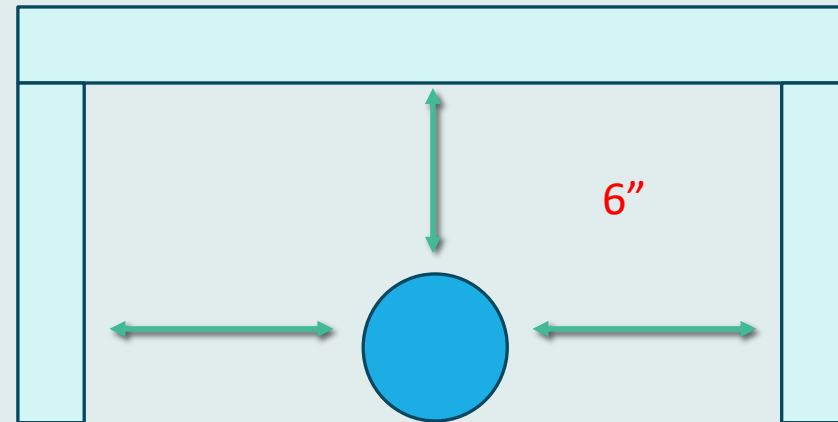
- Box insulation
- Insulated pipe
- Insulating concrete

Other Methods

There are other ways to insulate!

- **Box insulation**

- Insulated pipe
- Insulating concrete



Other Methods

There are other ways to insulate!

- Box insulation

- **Insulated pipe**

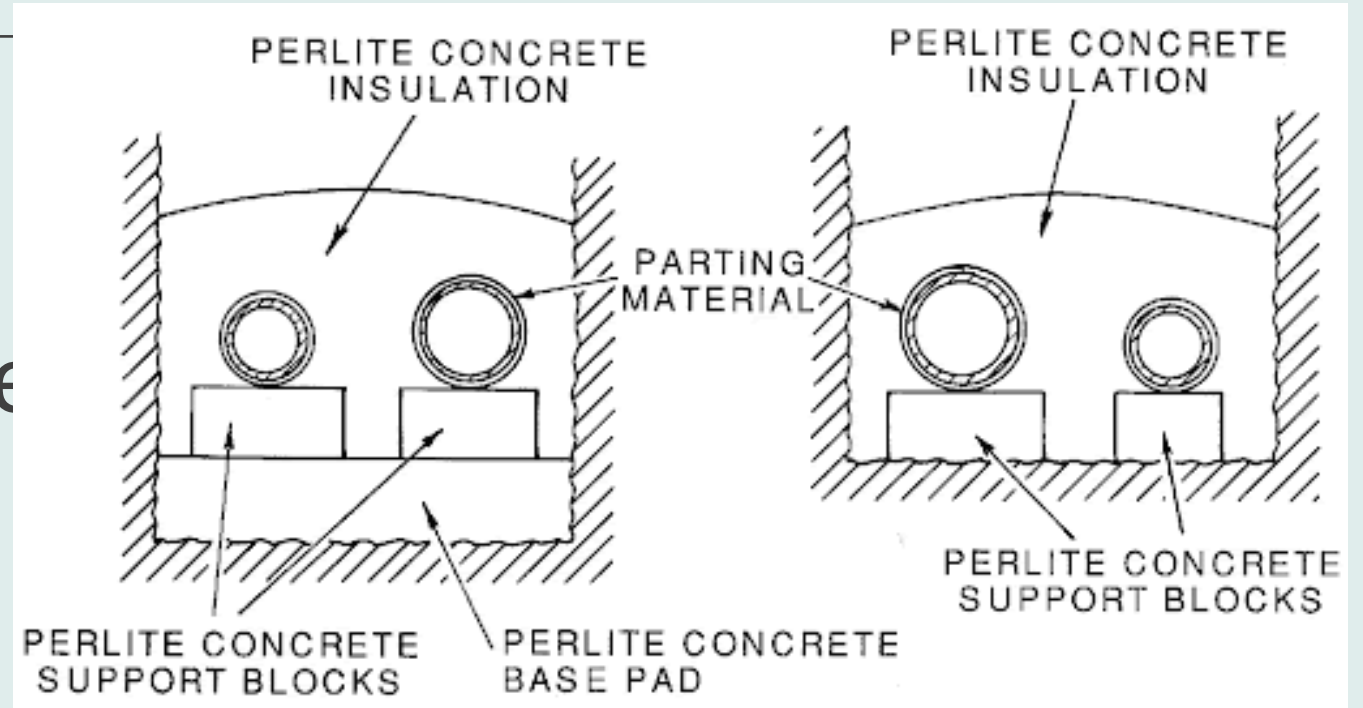
- Insulating concrete



Other Methods

There are other ways to insulate!

- Box insulation
- Insulated pipe
- Insulating concrete





Winter Soil Testing

Should we even go there?

What does the code say?

SPS 385.20(4) Soil evaluation conditions.

(a) Soil color evaluations shall be performed on days when light conditions permit accurate color determinations.

(b) Frozen soil material shall be thawed prior to conducting evaluations for soil color, texture, structure and consistence.





Winter construction

Should we even go there?

What does the code say?

SPS 383.45

(2) Frozen soil. POWTS treatment and dispersal components consisting in part of in situ soil may not be installed if the soil is frozen at or below the infiltrative surface of the component.

(3) Snow cover. Snow cover shall be removed before excavating or installing POWTS treatment and dispersal components consisting in part of in situ soil.

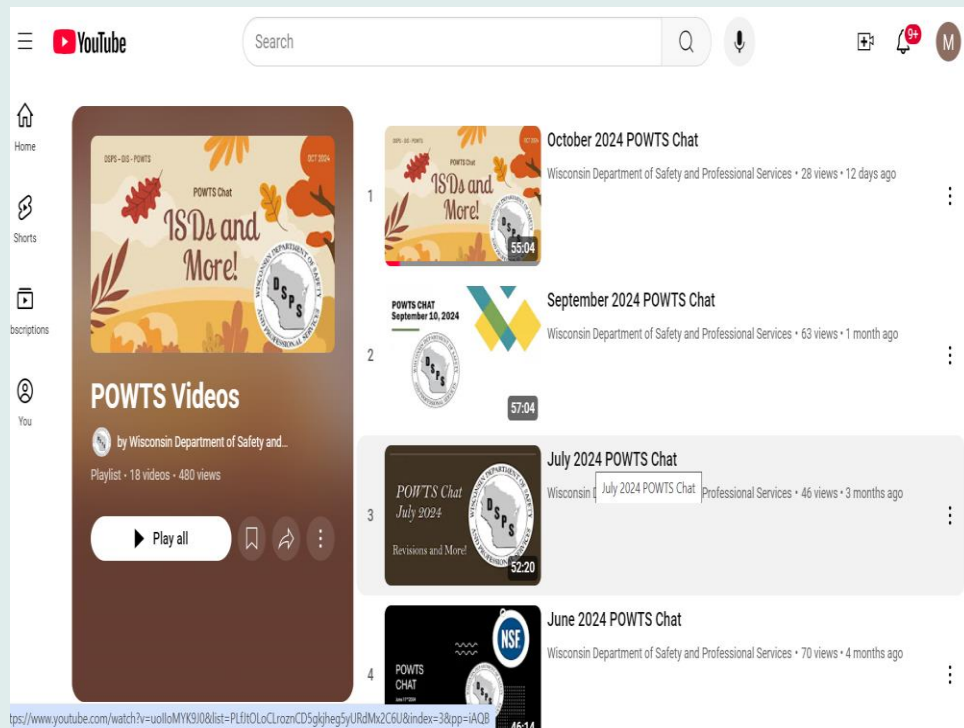


Mega-Conference



- Some takeaways...
- WI is still at the forefront of onsite wastewater.
 - Many states...
 - Patchwork of codes and ordinances
 - Do not have licensed installers
 - Soil test, design and inspection all at local level
 - Little vertical separation (6"!!!)
 - Keep up the good work!
- How to recruit and mentor emerging professionals.

POWTS Chat



➤ Second Tuesday of the Month, 9:00AM

➤ <https://bookwhen.com/wipowts>

➤ Consistently over 100 attendees each month

YouTube



- 35 and counting YouTube videos.
 - POWTS Chat back to 2022
 - Design class
 - Basic Soils
- More content to come.

Soils Training



- Two-day basic soil trainings were held in Rice Lake and Hancock in collaboration with UWEX in 2025.
- Various “pop-up” field sessions were held.
 - UWSP – Milo’s Acres
 - Farm Technology Days
 - Goose Island

Soils Training



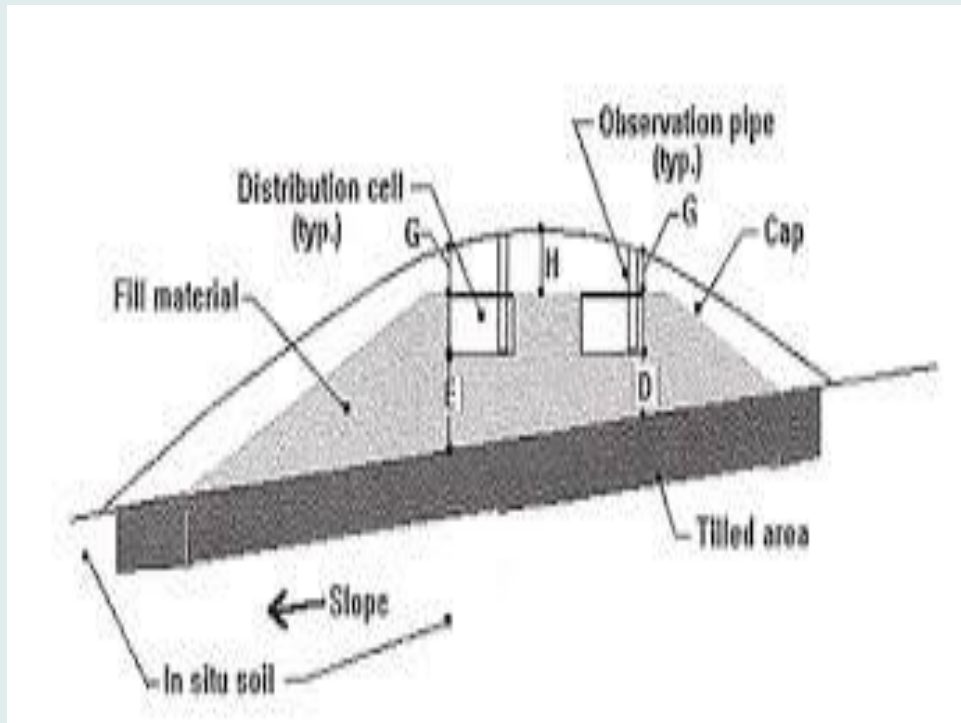
- This winter
 - Virtual Basic soils, 1 - 4 PM, Jan 21, 22, 28 & 29.
- Next spring
 - Basic soils class – TBD (Jefferson Area)
- Next summer
 - “pop-up” afternoon soil pit field days – TBD
- Next fall
 - Basic soils class – TBD (West Central WI)
- Watch DSPS website and sign up with BookWhen.

Soils Training



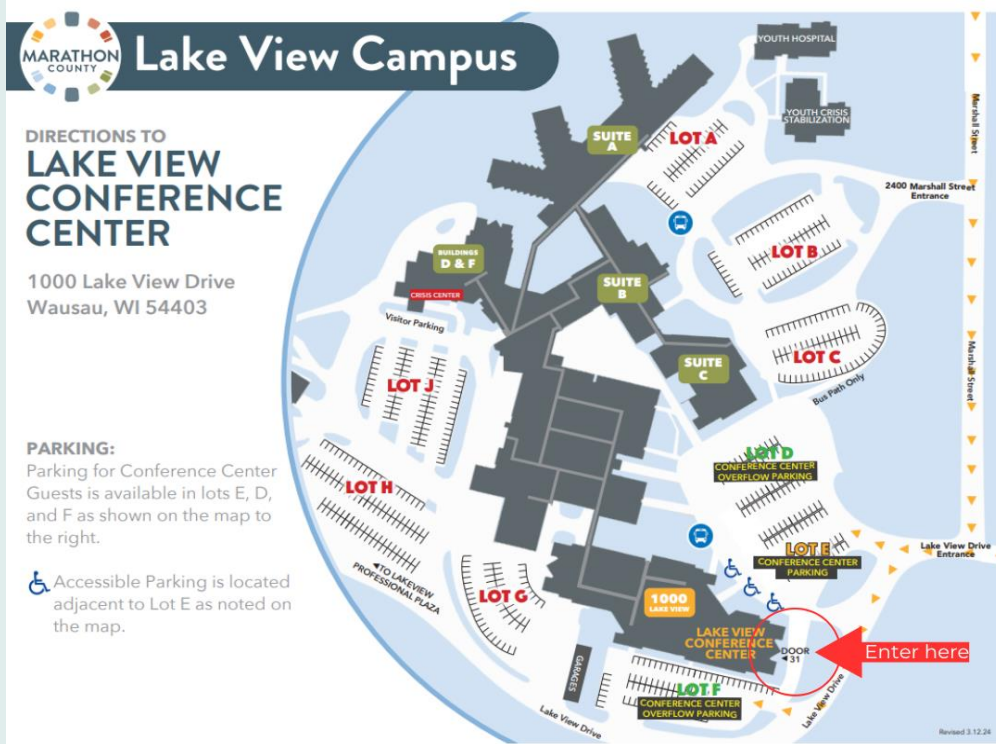
- Would an advanced soils class be beneficial?
- What topics would you like to see?

System Design Training



- System design class will be offered virtually this winter Jan 14th, 2026.
- Topics:
 - Pressure distribution
 - Mounds
 - Conventional In-Ground
 - Passive pretreatment products
- Watch & sign-up with BookWhen on the DSPS website!

Annual County Inspector Training



- March 10th & 11th, 2026
- Lake View Conference Center, 1000 Lake View Dr, Wausau WI
- 2 days of training for county staff
- Continuing Education Credits will be available.
- Similar format to previous years.
- “Don’t Miss” opportunity!!!

Other Training



- Wieser – (DSPS Update)
 - Kelly Lake – Feb 26th
 - Fond Du Lac – March 3rd
 - Portage – March 5th
 - Maiden Rock – March 10th
 - Spooner – March 12th
- First Supply – (DSPS soils)
 - West Bend – Feb 23rd
 - La Crosse – Feb 24th
 - Eau Claire – Feb 25th
 - Plover – Feb 26th
 - Rhinelander – Feb 27th

Even More Training



- WOWRA
 - POWTS Evaluator
 - Annual Conference – Feb 4-6, 2025
- County sponsored events
- Others???

“I’m here from the State & I’m here to help!”

➤ What we are doing:

- Increased presence in field
- Better product oversight
- More educational opportunities
- Timely plan review

➤ What could we be doing?

- ???
- ???
- ???



DSPS Forms

Why the Change is Happening

Web accessibility rules require websites and online documents to meet certain standards

Goal: Make forms usable by everyone, including people with disabilities

Ensures DSPS is compliant with current regulations

Possible Benefits –

Some forms are easier to fill out online (some are not)

More accessible for all users

Reduces need for printing/scanning

What's Changing (or really isn't)

Current PDFs and Word documents have been made available as online fillable forms

“Old paper” forms will still be accepted and used until such time that the Department decides otherwise

PDF and Word document forms will still be available by request from DSPS staff

What Forms Users Need To Do

Continue using paper forms if you wish or start using online forms

Familiarize yourself with the format (regulators especially)

Provide feedback if you encounter technical issues

SBD-6398, Sanitary Permit Application

12/17/2025 1:35:44 PM

Page 1

Introduction

Wisconsin Department of Safety and Professional Services

In accordance with [Wis. Admin. Code sec. SPS 383.21\(2\)](#), submission of this form to the appropriate governmental unit is required prior to obtaining a sanitary permit. Upon completion, you will be emailed a copy of the completed form for submittal. Include a complete plan on paper not less than 8 1/2 x 11 inches. Check with your local POWTS authority about additional requirements and fees.

Note that applications for state-owned POWTS are submitted to the Department via esla.wi.gov.

General

Information

Applicant

Name: Katie Petzel

Email: Katie.petzel@wisconsin.gov

Owner

Name: Test Test

Email: Test@test.com

Phone Number: (555) 555-5555

Mailing Address

Address Line 1: Test Test

Address Line 2:

City: Test

State: Wisconsin

Zip: 55555

Project and Site

Parcel ID: 55555555

State Transaction Number: PWTS-555555555-c

Project Address

Address Line 1: Test Test

Address Line 2:

City: Test

State: Wisconsin

Zip: 55555

CSM and Lot Number:

Subdivision:

Block and/or Lot:

Legal Description:

Government Lot

PLSS

Gov. Lot: 5

Section: S5

Township: T5N

Range (E or W): R5 W

Municipality Type:

City

Town

Village

Municipality Name: Test

County: Adams

Building

Type:

1- or 2-Family Dwelling

Public/Commercial

State-Owned

Number of Bedrooms: 3

POWTS Permit

Permit Type:

New System

Replacement System

Other Modification to Existing System

Additional Pretreatment Unit

Page 2

POWTS Type:

Holding Tank

In-Ground (conventional)

At-Grade

Mound

Individual Site Design

Other

Is there a previously issued permit?:

Yes

No

Dispersal/Treatment Area and Tank

Design Flow: 450 GPD

Design Soil Application Rate: .7 GPD / SF

Dispersal Area Required: 642.86

Dispersal Area Proposed: 650 Square Feet

System Elevation

System Elevation: 101 Feet

Tank Information

Type:

Septic

Holding

Dosing

New or Existing:

New

Existing

Material:

Prefab Concrete

Site Constructed

Steel

Fiberglass

Plastic

Manufacturer: Test

Septic Tank Capacity: 1000 Gallons

Page 3

Type:

Septic

Holding

Dosing

New or Existing:

New

Existing

Material:

Prefab Concrete

Site Constructed

Steel

Fiberglass

Plastic

Manufacturer: Test

Dosing Tank Capacity: 600 Gallons

Total Capacity of Septic Tanks: 1000 Gallons

Total Capacity of Holding Tanks: 0 Gallons

Total Capacity of Dosing Tanks: 600 Gallons

Total Capacity of All Tanks: 1600 Gallons

Total Number of Tanks: 2

Responsibility Statement

Signature

Plumber Name: Test Test

Plumber Email: katie.petzel@wisconsin.gov

Phone Number: (555) 555-5555

Plumber Credential Type:

Master Plumber

Master Plumber Restricted Service

Credential Number: 55555555 - PM

Address

Address Line 1: Test Test

Page 4

Address Line 2:

City: Test

State: Wisconsin

Zip: 55555

By inserting my typed signature below, I attest that the information provided is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief. I, as the licensed plumber, assume responsibility for installation of the POWTS shown on the submitted plans.

Electronic Signature of Plumber: Test Test

Date: 12/17/2025

Page 5

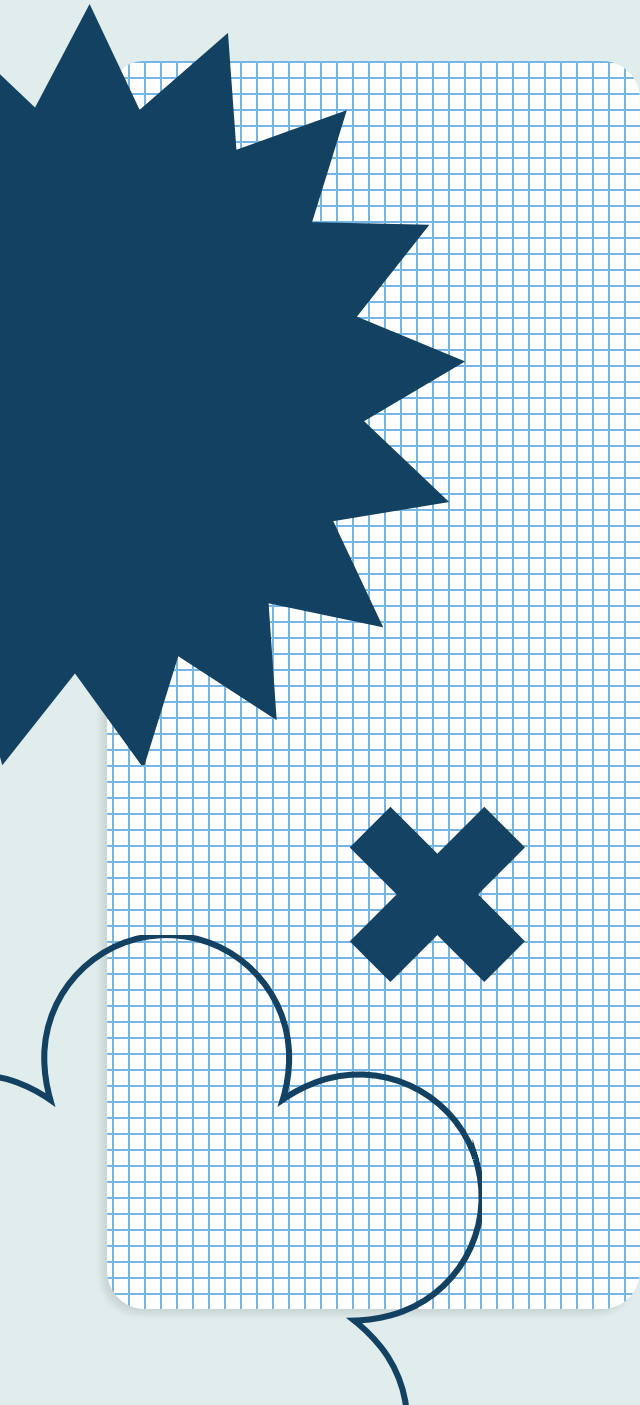
HEADS UP -

Sanitary permit application is ~5 pages

Soil Test is 10-20+ pages dependent on number of horizons and pits

Continuing Education

What's going on and how to obtain credit.





Why all the Issues?

- DSPS is holding CEU providers more accountable for classes which they offer.
 - Several classes were listing approval for licenses in which content did not apply to that license.
 - Some classes, although approved for 5 years, were substantially different class to class and year to year.
 - The Department's goal isn't to eliminate private education opportunities, but make sure those opportunities are valid, and relatable to the license.
-

How to obtain CEU course approval



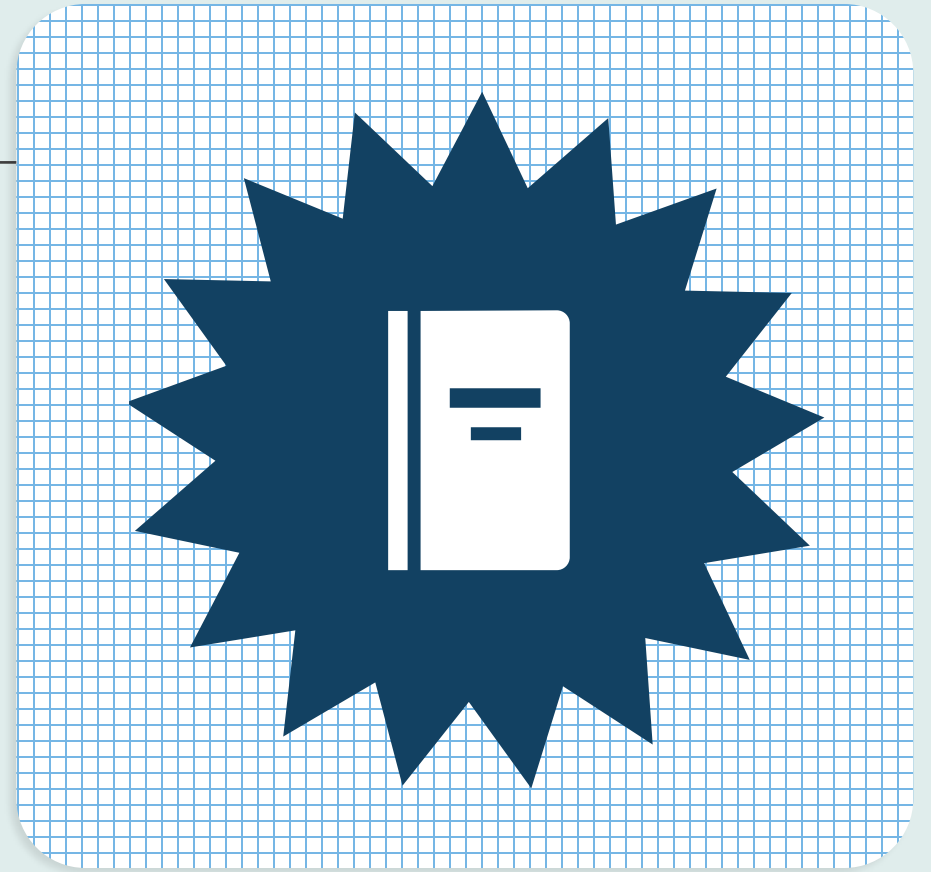
Some Basic Overview

Length of Approval

Submittal Requirements

Approval Timeline

Post Approval





Length of Approval

Classes are approved for a 5-year term

- Only applies if agenda does not change
- Can only receive credit once – no repeat attendance





Submittal Requirements

Course Summary

Course Outline (agenda in ½ hour increments)

Handouts, Videos, PowerPoints (or detailed summary of presentations)

Review Questions (not required for face-to-face)





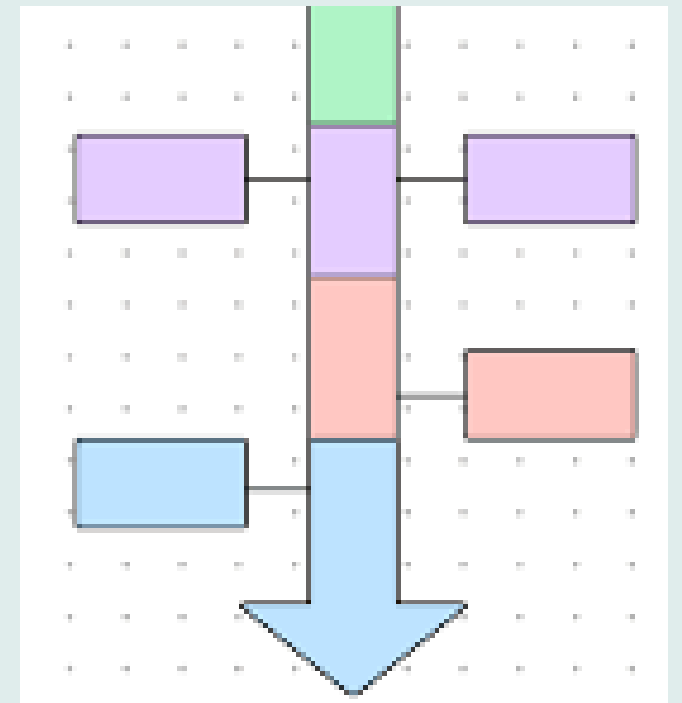
Timelines

Course must be submitted 30 days prior to offering.

Approval will be within 21 days of application.

- Do not offer course prior to approval as students may not receive credit.

Approval letter will show hours approved, credentials allowed, expiration date and course ID number.





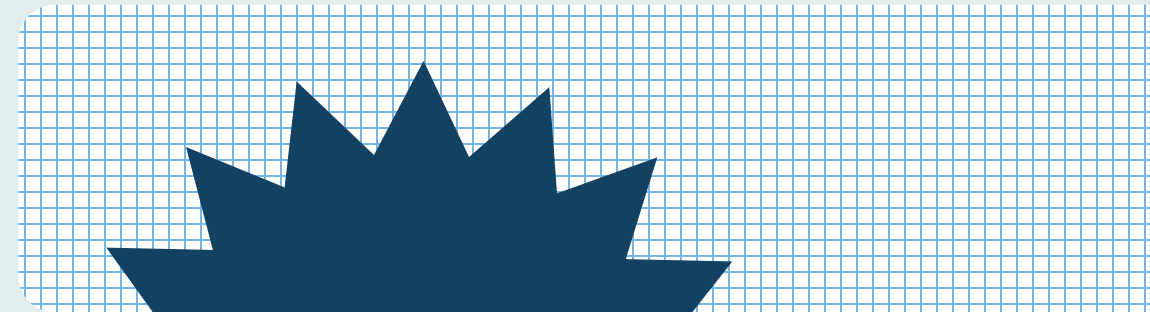
Post Approval

Maintain attendance record of attendees.

Provide an attendance record to the student.

Report attendance to DSPS within 14 days.





Application is online

- [DSPS HOME PAGE](#)
- [Self Service](#)
- [Cont. Education Course Approval Application](#)
- [Start Form](#)

Note: Licensing and Credentialing review content to determine where credits are applicable. Passed down to subject experts from there to answer specific questions.

3070-OEE, Request for Trades Education Course Approval

Introduction
Course Provider Information
Course Information
Course Materials

Wisconsin Department

Instructions: Use this form to apply for approval to offer

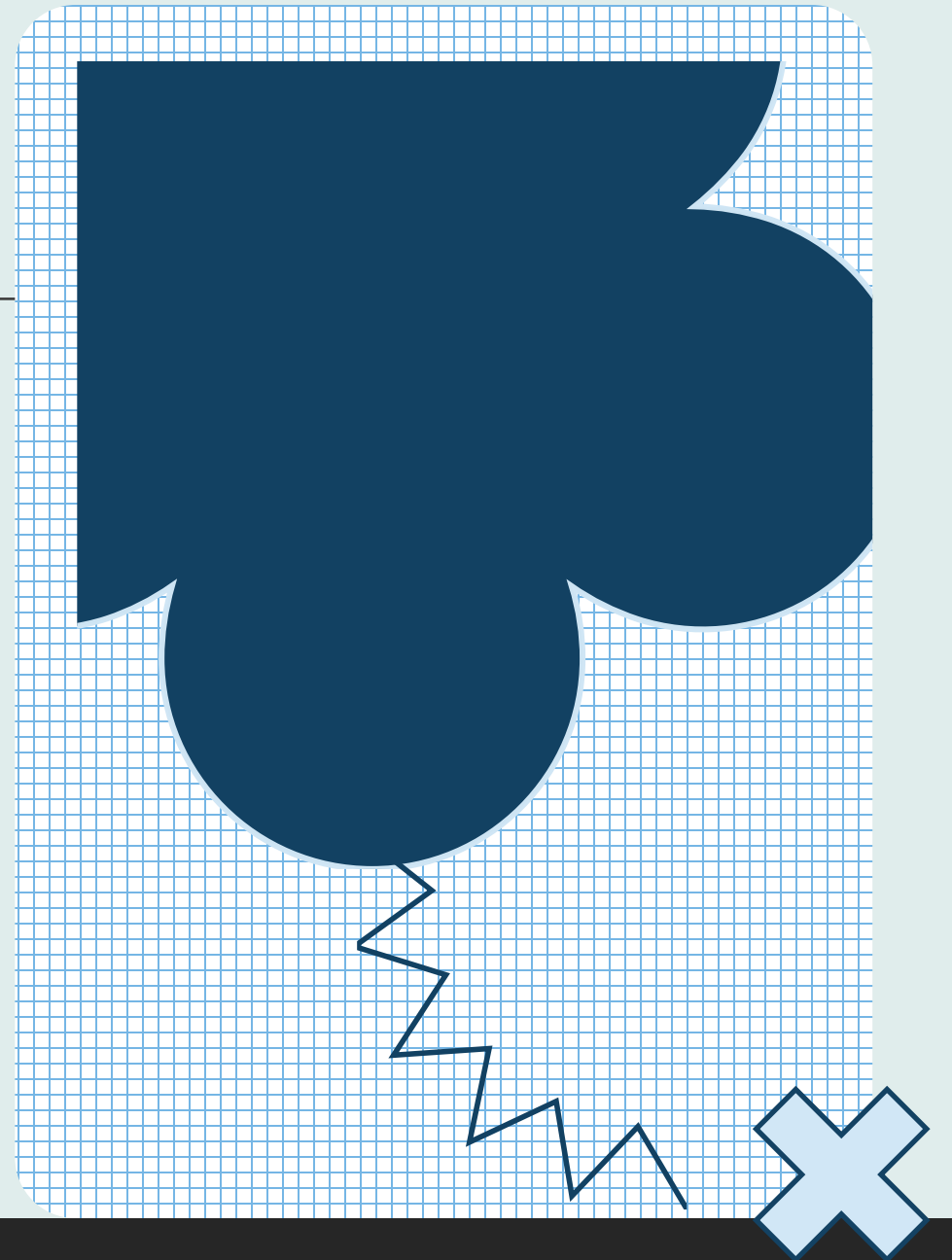
Step 1: Complete the first page of this form. Please include

Some credential types require an initial 'Qualifier' course designed to be offered as a 'Qualifier' training course, be the title.

Step 2: Provide the following application materials:

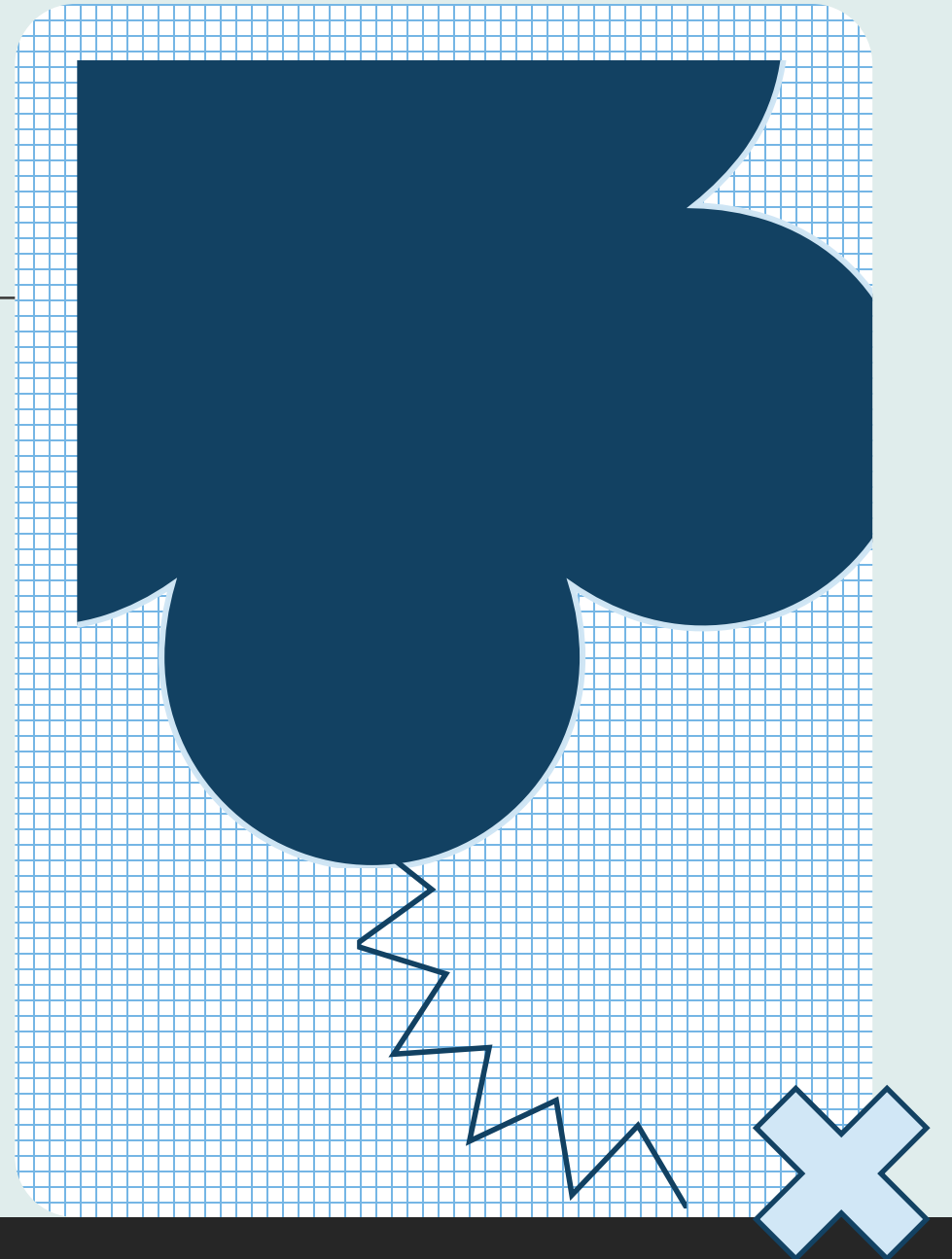
- **Course summary** describing in detail the subject matter

Be patient! It's a learning curve for everyone.



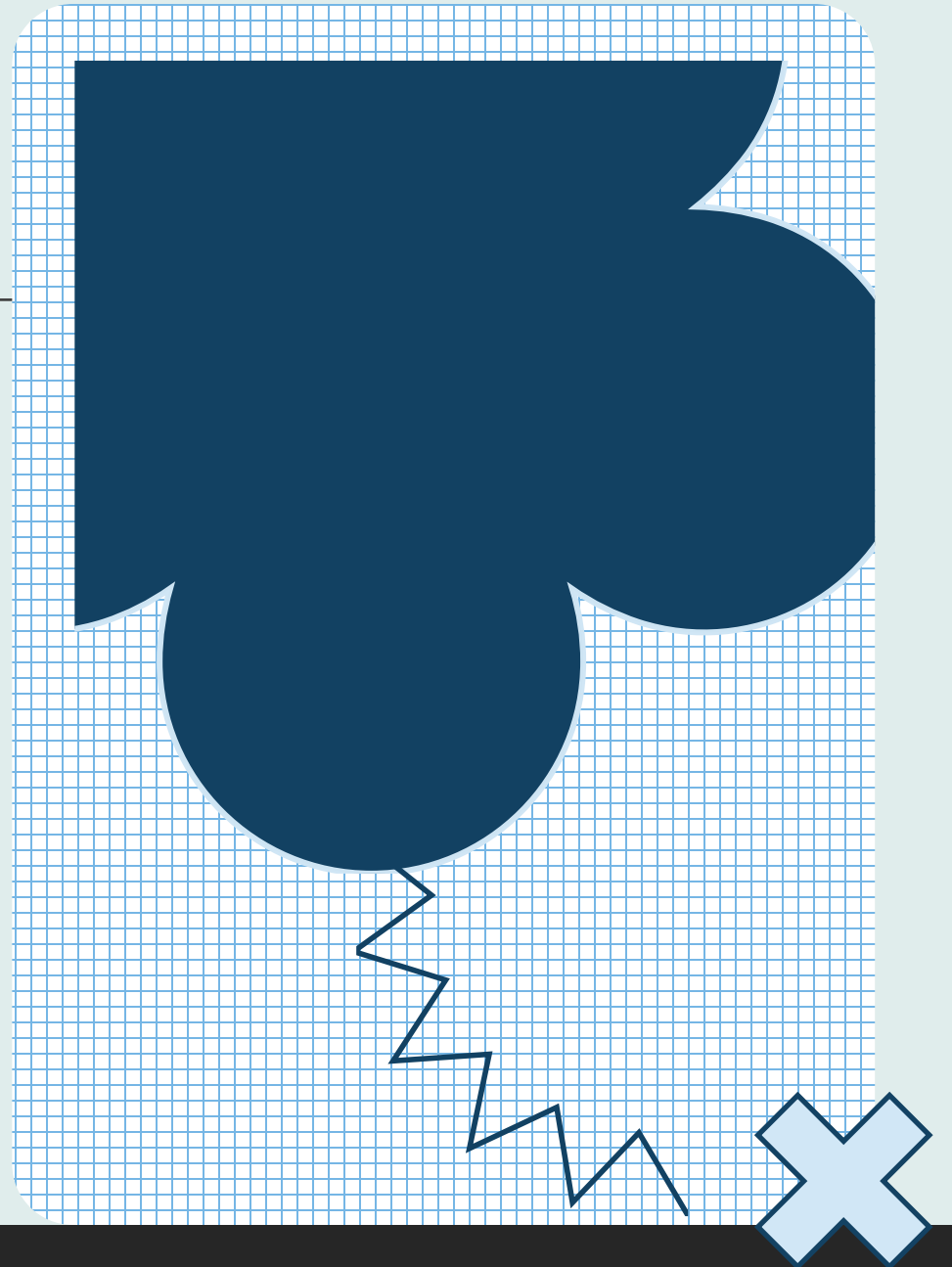
3 year vs. 1 year Maintenance

This was removed from the code package and that package will move forward to the legislator and governor for approval.



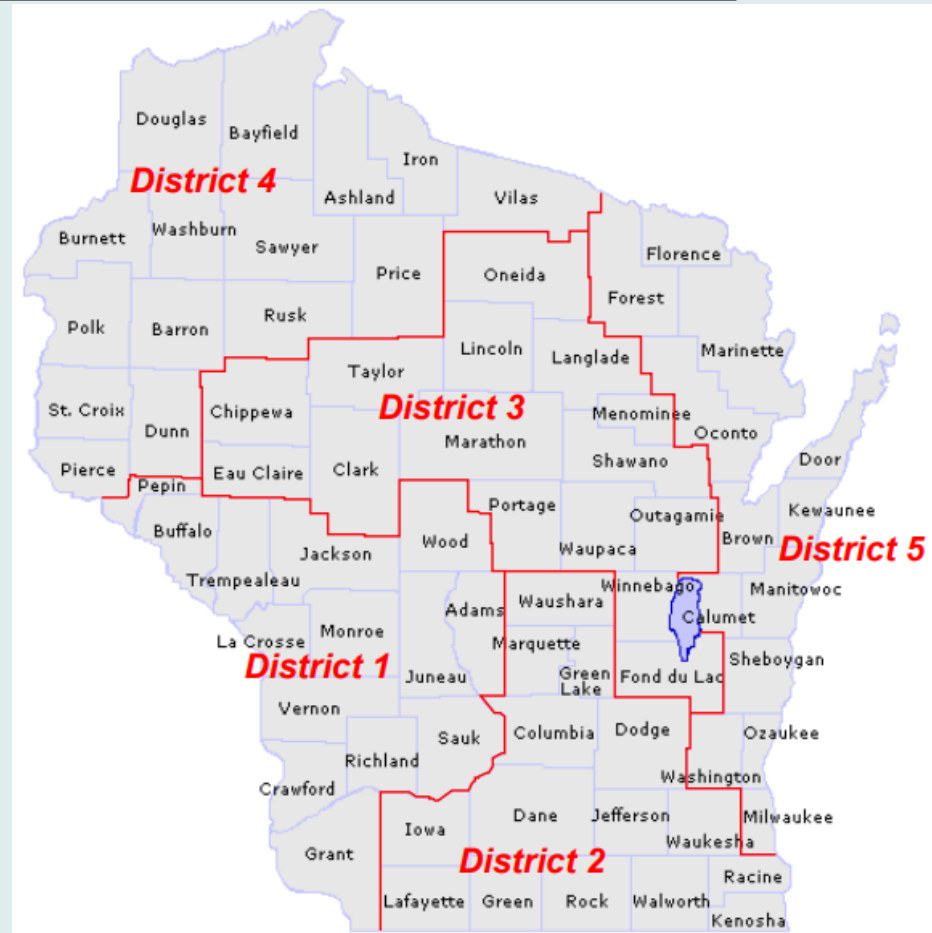
SPS 383.21

In ch. SPS 383, Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems, the project updated requirements to clarify that a governmental unit may deny the issuance of a sanitary permit if an existing POWTS system is determined to be failing and another system is readily available



POWTS Staff

1 – Jeff Brewbaker	Jeff.Brewbaker@wisconsin.gov	608-516-6428
2 – Travis Wagner	Travis.Wagner@wisconsin.gov	608-598-0715
3 – Matt Janzen	Matthew.Janzen@wisconsin.gov	715-340-0407
4 – Katie Petzel	Katie.Petzel@wisconsin.gov	608-574-1189
5 – Tim VanderLeest	Tim.VanderLeest@wisconsin.gov	608-516-6134
Josh Rowley	Joshua.rowley@wisconsin.gov	715-634-5124
Heidi Eide	Heidi.Eide@wisconsin.gov	715-634-8964
Tim Zoromski	timothy.zoromski@wisconsin.gov	715-634-8114
April Hammond	april.hammond@wisconsin.gov	608-225-6593





Thank you

Travis Wagner

608-598-0715

Travis.Wagner@Wisconsin.gov

DSPS.WI.GOV