

WET-WEATHER SOIL TESTING IN MONTEREY COUNTY

MEASURING DEPTH TO GROUNDWATER



Why wet-weather testing?

A sub-surface sewage disposal system requires adequate vertical separation between the drainfield and groundwater. This is important, not only for the proper operation of the system, but to protect groundwater from nitrate and other organic contamination. *Minimum* vertical separation distance from a leach line to ground water is 10 feet, and from a seepage pit to ground water is 15 feet. Particular site conditions or soil percolation rates may necessitate more than the minimum separation. The Division of Environmental Health will determine the required vertical separation based on these site-specific factors.

Any of the following conditions at the project site is an indication that the level of groundwater is of concern:

- close proximity to a spring, drainage channel, creek, stream, river, lake or designated flood plain
- presence of certain plants which indicate saturated soil conditions
- presence of known sheet water, perched water or seasonally high groundwater conditions in the vicinity, or the indication of such conditions as a result of soil testing or excavation.

When is wet-weather testing done?

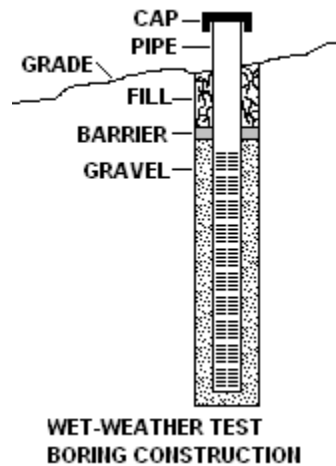
Wet-weather testing is done

- between January 1 and June 1, and
- after 55% or more of the average seasonal rainfall has occurred, and
- after 8% or more of the average seasonal rainfall has occurred in the preceding 30 days.

How is groundwater level established?

A *boring* (also known as an *exploratory hole*) is used to directly measure the distance between the natural grade and groundwater level. The depth of the boring is at least equal to the depth of the drainfield plus the required vertical separation between the drainfield and groundwater. The boring is comprised of a three inch perforated pipe, inserted into a six-inch borehole. The space between the pipe and the borehole is packed with gravel to within one foot of the natural grade. The upper

one-foot is filled with compacted native material, separated from the gravel by material that is suitable to prevent infill of the gravel pores. The pipe extends above the natural grade and is fitted with a removable cap.



Direct measurements of the distance between the natural grade and any groundwater are made through the pipe. The measurements are made and recorded at intervals (not exceeding seven days between measurements) for a proscribed period of time or until the groundwater level is constant or begins to drop.

Environmental Health must be notified before a boring for wet-weather testing is begun. It is important to work closely with the Environmental Health Specialist. The Specialist must approve placement of the boring to assure that the most accurate measurements will be obtained. The Specialist may also need to witness some or all of the measurements.

No separate application to construct or destroy a boring for the purpose of a wet-weather test is required. However, unless otherwise authorized by the Director of Environmental Health, all borings *must* be properly destroyed after the wet-weather testing is completed. Removing the perforated pipe and filling the borehole with an approved impermeable material accomplishes destruction.

For information about the placement and engineering of a subsurface sewage disposal system, the pamphlet *Preparing a Site Plan* can be obtained from the Monterey County Planning and Building Inspection Department, and the pamphlet *Siting an Onsite Sewage Disposal System* can be obtained from your local Environmental Health office.

**MONTEREY COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**

Salinas (Central Office) (831) 755-4505
1270 Natividad Rd Rm 301
Salinas CA 93906-3198
FAX (831) 755-4880

Monterey (831) 647-7654
1200 Aguajito Rd
Monterey CA 93940
FAX (831) 647-7925

King City (831) 386-6899
620 Broadway Ste N
King City CA 93930
FAX (831) 385-0573