

Septic Re-inspection Programs

Township of Douro-Dummer

October 4, 2017

Matt Faris, Public Health Inspector



Peterborough
Public Health

Septic Re-inspection Programs?

- 2 different types of septic re-inspection programs
- Ontario Building Code (OBC) refers to these programs as, “*Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Programs*” (Section 1.10 of Division C of the OBC)

“Sewage System Maintenance Inspection Programs”

- 1. Mandatory** Maintenance Inspection Programs
- 2. Discretionary** Maintenance Inspection Programs



Mandatory Maintenance Inspection Programs

- Mandated by the Province (under the OBC)
- “Vulnerable areas” identified under the Clean Water Act, 2006
- Particularly vulnerable areas = areas close to municipal drinking water wells
- 124 properties identified within Peterborough County and City



Mandatory Maintenance Inspection Programs (2)

- 15 properties identified in Douro-Dummer
- These sewage systems must be inspected every 5 years
- The cost is \$325.00 per inspection under County of Peterborough By-law # 2016-85

Discretionary Maintenance Inspection Programs

- Legislative authority comes from clause 7(1)(b.1) of the Building Code Act, 1992
- These programs are organized by Municipalities and the respective Principal Authority (Peterborough Public Health)
- Purpose is to identify failing or 'high risk' systems that would not be identified through Mandatory Maintenance Inspection Programs



Discretionary Maintenance Inspection Programs (2)

- The cost is \$325.00 per inspection under County of Peterborough By-law # 2016-86
- The Municipality determines how to best collect the fees



Why Peterborough Public Health?

- Peterborough Public Health (PPH) is the **‘principal authority’** under the Building Code Act
- Responsible for enforcing Part 8 (Sewage Systems) of the Ontario Building Code
- PPH houses the historical files relating to existing sewage systems
- Operate an extensive up to date database

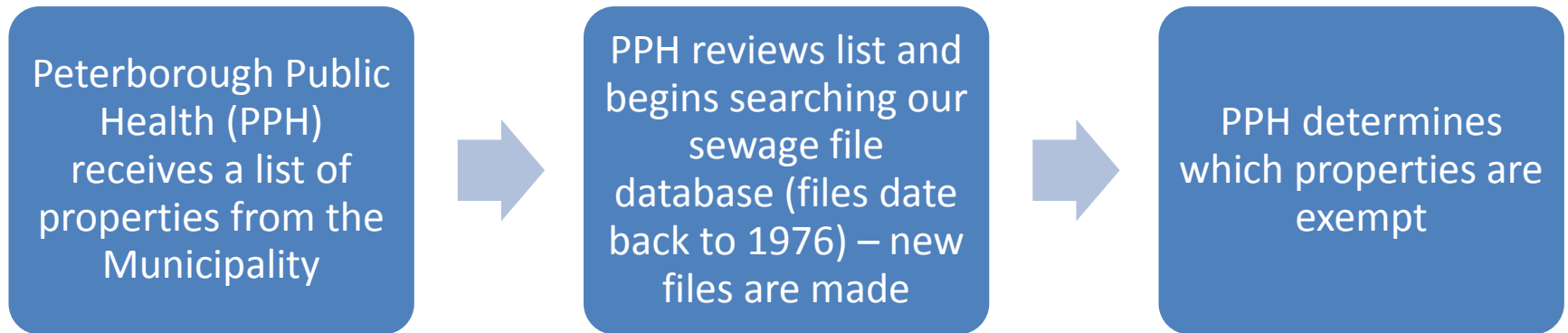
Why Peterborough Public Health? (2)

- Public Health Inspectors (PHI's) - educated at accredited post secondary schools and Certified through the Canadian Institute of Public Health Inspectors
- PHI's involved in the PPH 'Safe Sewage Disposal Program' have further qualifications under the Building Code Act

Why Peterborough Public Health? (3)

- PPH can use the **Health Protection and Promotion Act** in addition to the **Ontario Building Code** to resolve issues in relation to sewage
- PPH has the tools, staff and knowledge to provide this service

Overview of the Process



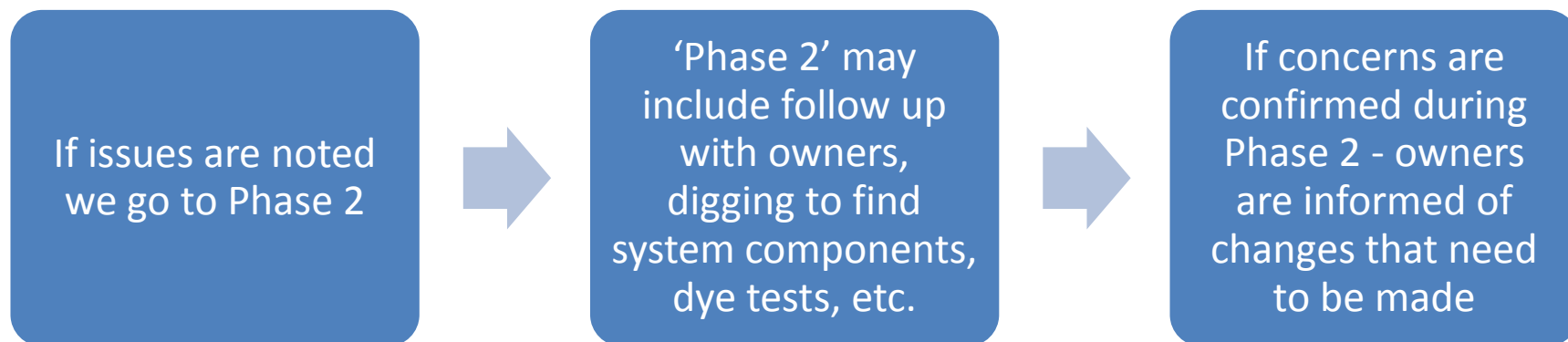
Overview of the Process (2)



Overview of the Process (3)



Overview of the Process (4)



Overview of the Process (5)

- PPH will follow up to ensure the required changes are made.

A 'Closer Look' at the Inspection Process



Phase 1 – Maintenance Inspection

- PPH receives list of properties to be inspected from Municipality
- Begin to search our sewage database (back to 1976)
- Looking for information on the systems to be inspected
 - Sewage system permits
 - Change of use permits (for certain renovations, additions, new outbuildings, pool construction, etc.)
 - Rezoning or minor variance comments, etc.



Phase 1 – Maintenance Inspection (2)

- PPH identifies properties that are exempt from the program

Exempt from this program:

- Septic systems installed within the last 5 years
- Septic systems that fall under the Mandatory Maintenance Inspection Program (Source Water Protection Areas, began in May 2014)

Phase 1 – Maintenance Inspection (3)

- Day of the inspection
- Looking at the information we have to locate the components of the septic system
- Visual inspection
- Looking for signs of failure:
 - Ponding or spongy ground
 - Unpleasant odours
 - Dead spots, etc.



Phase 1 – Maintenance Inspection (4)

- Looking for things that could put the system at a high risk for failure
 - New construction
 - High traffic area over leaching bed
 - Gardens planted over leaching bed, etc.

Phase 2 – Follow-Up Maintenance Inspections

- May be required where there's missing information about the system
 - System location is unknown
 - Size/type of tank unknown
- May be required due to signs of failure or the system is at high risk for failure

Phase 2 – Follow Up Maintenance Inspections (2)

- Phase 1 inspections will generally avoid disturbance to the soil or the system
- Phase 2 inspections may be more invasive and might include:
 - Uncovering and opening the septic tank
 - Locating and uncovering a portion of the leaching bed
 - Conducting dye tests, etc.



Phase 2 – Follow Up Maintenance Inspections (3)

- If a failing system is identified then corrective action will need to be taken by the property owner
- Corrective action may include:
 - Having the septic tank pumped
 - Having a blockage removed from within tank
 - Having a new tank, leaching bed or system installed

Phase 2 – Follow Up Maintenance Inspections (4)

- Not out to cast blame on property owners
- Goal is to identify failing or ‘at risk’ systems and take corrective action
- Ultimately the property owner does have a legal responsibility to maintain their septic system so that it is functioning properly

Trent Lakes – Discretionary Maintenance Inspection Program

- Currently wrapping up our second year of a discretionary septic re-inspection program in Trent Lakes
- In our first year (2016) we required either more information or remediation measures from 15% of properties inspected
- Most residents very supportive of program

Selwyn – Discretionary Maintenance Inspection Program

- In 2018 PPH will be starting our first year of a discretionary septic re-inspection program in Selwyn
- Looking at a 10 year re-inspection cycle

PPH – Discretionary Maintenance Inspection Program Delivery

- Currently developing new educational outreach resources, such as:
 - New website dedicated to discretionary inspection programs
 - Videos with basic information on septic maintenance
 - FAQ documents
- We are looking at what we can do to continue improving this program



PPH – Discretionary Maintenance Inspection Program Delivery (2)

- As always, if you have any questions please call us at **(705) 743-1000**

Why?

- *Discretionary Maintenance Inspection Programs* are designed to catch the failing or 'high-risk' sewage systems that would not otherwise be identified under the *Mandatory Maintenance Inspection Program*
- All areas (not just areas around municipal wells) are vulnerable to contamination
- Will give PPH the opportunity to educate property owners that are unfamiliar with sewage system maintenance



Ultimately...

- To ensure that sewage systems are being properly operated and maintained
- The effect of a failing sewage system can extend far beyond property lines
- Failing sewage systems can pose a serious threat to both **public health** and our **natural environment**

Thank You

Questions?

[\(705\) 743-1000](tel:(705)743-1000)



Peterborough
Public Health