

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **When does the Board of Health hold their meetings?** The Board meets on Monday evenings at 7:00 pm. at the Town Hall Annex, 261 George Ryder Rd. Meetings are generally held the 2nd, and 4rd Monday of each month (unless posted otherwise, please confirm with Health Dept. Secretary).
2. **How can determine the location of my septic system?** The Health Department has files on most properties in Chatham. Call the Health Department to see if one is available for your property. If we have the information, we will make copies for you to pick up.
3. **How many bedrooms am I allowed to have at my property?** The Chatham Board of Health's Interim Nitrogen Loading Regulation states that, for any new construction, or additions to an existing dwelling, one bedroom per 10,000 ft² of lot area is allowed. Repairs to existing Title 5 septic systems are allowed to be designed and installed only for the existing number of bedrooms on the property.
4. **How often should I pump my septic system?** Every two to three years is recommended for most properties under normal use.
5. **How close to a septic system can a full foundation wall be?** The septic tank must be 10 feet away and the leaching area must be 20 feet away from a foundation wall. All components can be 10 feet away from a slab foundation or a frost wall (leaching area must be at an elevation below the slab or footings of frost wall). An in ground swimming pool is required to have the same setbacks as a full foundation.
6. **How long are Title 5 Inspections valid?** Inspections are valid for two years, unless the system was pumped yearly, and records kept, in which case, the inspection is valid for three years. If the dwelling is a part of a condominium complex with greater than five units, then the condominium association is required to have all their septic systems inspected every three years. Therefore, these inspections are valid for three years. Town of Chatham regulations require the system to be inspected within thirty days of the sale; or a waiver must be received from the Health Department
7. **How long is a Certificate of Compliance valid?** Certificates of compliance are accepted in lieu of Title 5 inspections for two years from the date the compliance was issued. A waiver from the Town of Chatham Regulations may be required if the Certificate of Compliance is more than six months old.
8. **Should a septic tank be pumped before a Title 5 inspection?** The system should not be pumped in the two weeks before the inspection. The tank may be pumped after the inspection is completed for maintenance purposes.

9. **If I have a cesspool do I have to replace it?** Cesspools are considered an automatic failure criterion for real estate transfers within the Town of Chatham. They must be upgraded to Title 5 as part of the transfer of the property.
10. **Do I need to have a Title 5 inspection if I am transferring property between family members?** Transfers between spouses or immediate family members, i.e. between parents and children or between full siblings, are not required to have a Title 5 inspection completed. In addition inspections are not required when property is put in Trust when one of the designated beneficiaries is of the first degree of relationship to the grantor.
11. **What do I do if I find a dead bird?** If the Bird appears to be recently deceased and is in good condition then call the Health Department for instructions.
12. **How often are public bathing beaches tested for water quality?** All public beaches are tested weekly by the Town of Chatham Water Quality Laboratory during the summer season. Test results are posted at the Town Offices, Annex Permit Department, and on the Towns website.
13. **How often are restaurants inspected in Chatham?** The Health Department staff inspects all restaurants in Chatham at least twice a year.
14. **Who is licensed to repair my septic system?** The Health Department has a complete list of licensed septic installers; licensed septic pumpers and engineers available at the office.
15. **How do I have my well water tested?** The Health Department recommends that residents connected to a private well have their water tested annually. Testing options include private laboratories listed in the phone book or at the Barnstable County Laboratory. If you choose the latter option, you may pick up a water sample bottle at the Health Department office, and they will provide details on where to bring the sample once collected.