

Skagit County Code 12.05

On-site Sewage Code



Britt Pfaff Dunton and Charese Gainor
Environmental Health | Public Health
Skagit County

How We Got Here

- On-site septic regulations start with Washington State Department of Health.
- Washington Administrative Code Chapter 246-272A is the basis for all septic systems in State.
- WADOH began the rule revision process in 2018.
- Adoption by Washington State Board of Health January 10, 2024.

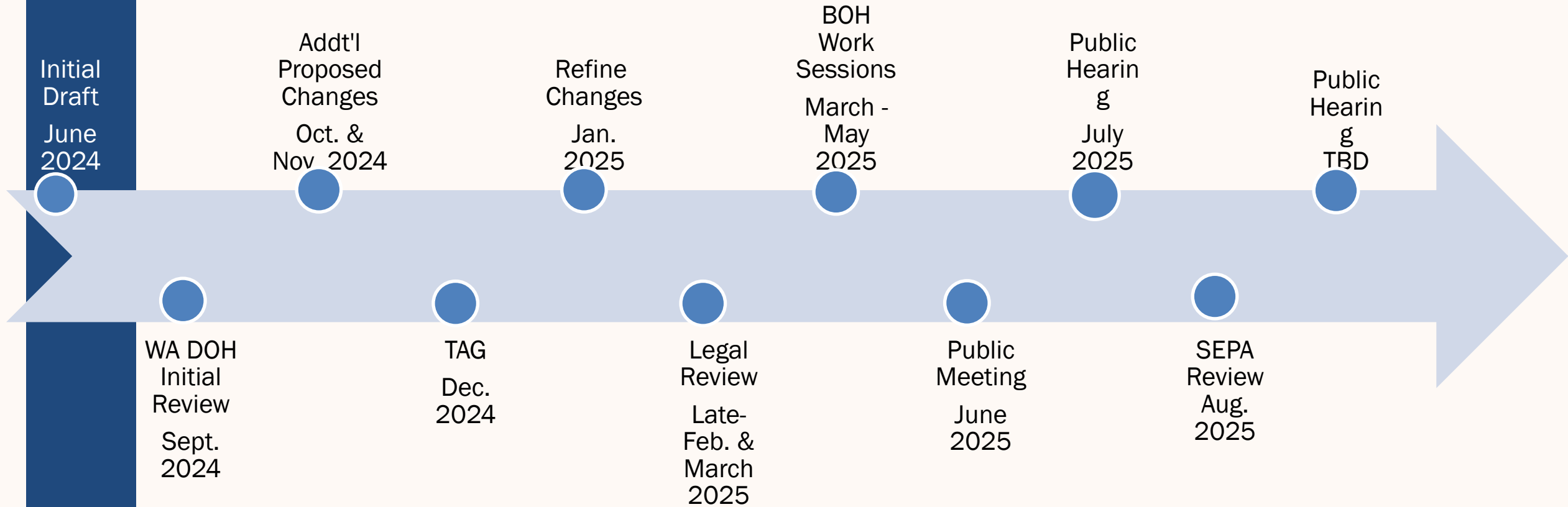


How We Got Here

- Rule effective dates staggered most revisions effective April 1, 2025.
- WADOH revising WAC sets in motion all Local Health Jurisdiction reviewing & updating local regulations.
- All LHJ regulations must be as stringent as WAC; regulations cannot be less stringent.



Timeline



Request for Input & Comment

Provider
Notification
June 5, 2025

Press
Release
June 16,
2025

First Set of
Comments
received
July 5,
2025

Second Set of
Comments
Received
July 16, 2025

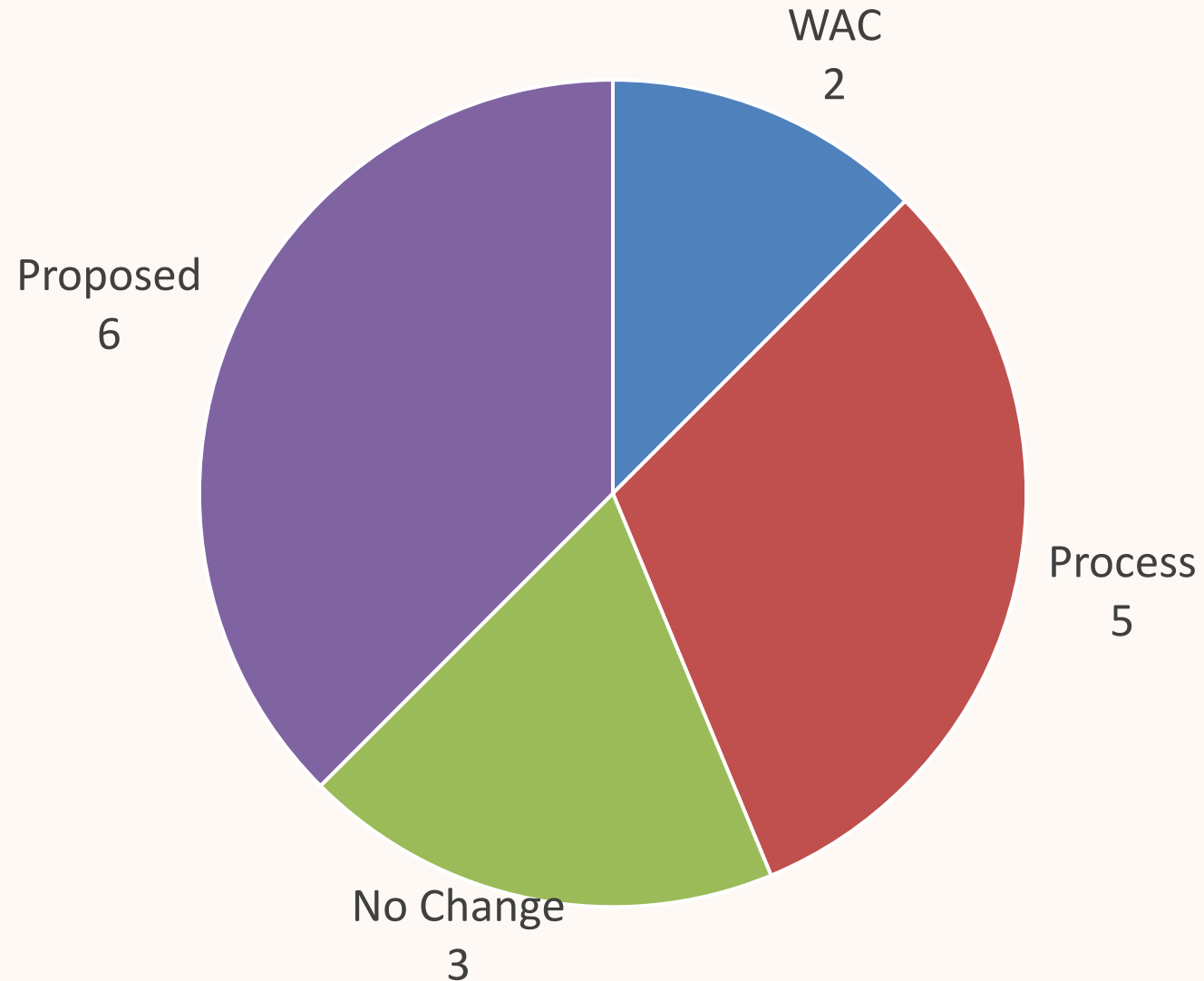
Newspaper
Publishing
#1
June 12,
2025

Newspaper
Publishing
#2
June 19,
2025

Provider
Notification #2
July 14, 2025



Summary of Written Comments



WAC

12.05.060 reference to Vertical Datum

Concerns with overburdening the designer and there by the homeowner with required information regarding elevations and reference surface.

Response

This section of proposed Skagit County Code is verbatim from WAC. Local Health Jurisdictions cannot be less stringent than WAC.



Process Based Question

- Criteria to allow reserve area between trenches
- Requesting permission to backfill before a final construction inspection
- Cases in which the designer can complete the final construction inspection on behalf of Public Health
- Clarification of which fees to be paid through Civic Access or directly to Public Health

Response

These are all process or policy-based questions that are not related to code revisions.



No Change

Minimum Septic Tank Sizing

Reasoning for larger (more stringent) septic tank sizing.

Response:

The purpose of a septic tank is to accept peak flows while providing a minimum retention time of 36 hours for separation of solids and liquids.

Based on the calculations, an increased tank size is supported.



Proposed Revisions

12.05.122 (3)(a) & (b) Septic Tank

Two compartments of a septic tank need not be in the same tank. In other words, two trash tanks with appropriate volumes can act as the first and second compartments of a two-compartment tank, respectively.

Response

The proposed language is not written or intended to disallow two sewage tanks in series as allowed in WAC.



Proposed Revisions

12.05.122 (4) 2nd compartment as pumping basin

Agrees with preferable situation to have separate tanks but concerns with feasibility of a septic tank in front of a lift tank or pump basin in all situations, especially repairs.

Response

Regulations are written as the primary standards for system configuration. When standards set forth cannot be met for a given site, Public Health works with the owners and designers to find a pathway to yes.



Proposed Revisions

12.05.140 (2) Final construction inspection request

Two working days to request a final construction inspection is not feasible due to too many construction variables. Offers installation has started notification as alternative.

Response

Providers are free to notify Public Health with intent to begin construction *with anticipated timeline for being ready for final construction inspection*, to meet the proposed code requirement.



Proposed Revisions

12.05.160 (6) Pumping & Inspection Report Timeline

Customer nonpayment may delay submittal of reports.

Response

Customer payment of services does not negate or minimize the public health need for timely reporting, especially when an immediate public health hazard exists.



Proposed Revisions

12.05.230 (5)(c) Certification Training Demonstration

Sixteen CEUs seems a bit excessive as the previous (current) code only required eight CEUs for any installer level.

Level 2 Certification doubled the previous training requirement.

Response

Current and proposed code offer an option and flexibility to utilize a combination of hands-on employment experience and classroom style learning.



What's Next?

SEPA Review -
15 day
comment
period. August
2025

BOH Meeting
August 19

BOH public
hearing &
potential
action. Sept or
Oct. 14



Contact Information:

Charese Gainor

On-Site & Drinking Water Lead
Skagit County Public Health

Britt Pfaff Dunton

Environmental Health Manager
Skagit County Public Health

Septic@co.skagit.wa.us

360-416-1500

