

## 2.03 SEWAGE SLUDGE UTILIZATION PERMITS

- ❑ *Question: Am I utilizing, treating, composting, transporting, storing, distributing, applying on land, incinerating, conducting an innovative or research project or disposing of sewage sludge or a product containing sewage sludge?*

### Why do I need this approval?

Sewage sludge (also known as biosolids) is not sewage. It is one of the final products of the treatment of sewage at a wastewater treatment plant. After treatment to break down the organic matter and destroy disease causing organisms, the remaining fine particles ultimately become sewage sludge. The application of sewage sludge to land returns essential nutrients to the soil, adds organic matter, and can improve the tillability and moisture retention capability of the soil.

A sewage sludge utilization permit is required for any person who treats, composts, transports, stores, distributes, applies to land, incinerates, conducts innovative or research projects or disposes of sewage sludge or septage (effluent from septic tanks) in Maryland.

### What laws or regulations give MDE the legal authority to issue this approval?

STATE: Environment Article - Title 9, Subtitle 2, Annotated Code of Maryland; COMAR 26.04.06.

### What is the process to get this approval?

1) The applicant submits a completed application and the six copies (4 copies for renewals) to be distributed to local agencies.

2) The Department conducts an inspection of the proposed site.

3a) For applications to apply sewage sludge to marginal land (reclamation site), or for the construction of a permanent facility (a treatment or composting facility, or an incinerator), the Department will publish a notice of application received in a local newspaper. Upon request from the local government, the Department will publish notice and conduct a public informational meeting for applications to apply sewage sludge to agricultural land or a public hearing on an application to apply sewage sludge to marginal land (reclamation site) or for construction of a permanent facility; or

3b) For applications to install, materially alter or materially extend a structure used for the storage or distribution of sewage sludge. After completion of the technical review of the application, the Department prepares and publishes a notice of tentative determination and public hearing regarding the permit application.

4) After the close of the public hearing record, the Department provides written responses to the comments and publishes a notice of final determination on the application, and if a final determination is not required, the Department's tentative determination becomes a final decision.

### Before I apply for this approval, do I need to get any approvals from the local or federal government?

Some counties have delegated authority for septage management. Check with the specified county. Sewage sludge storage and composting facilities must comply with county zoning and land use requirements and provide a written statement that the county does not oppose the issuance of the permit for a composting facility.

### Are there any other requirements?

PRE-APPROVAL: Non-governmental permittees must maintain the bonding requirements as specified in COMAR 26.04.06.07.

### How long should I expect it to take to get this approval once I submit a complete application?

Type of Approval	Turnaround Time
Application to agricultural or marginal land	10 months
Innovative projects	24 months
Research projects	45 days
Utilization or disposal at municipal landfill	5 months
Transportation	4 months
Treatment, burning, or storage	23 months
Sewage sludge landfill	36 months
Handling/Distribution	6 months

### Once I get this approval, how long will it last?

Maximum of five years for all sewage sludge utilization permits except treatment (composting facilities), which are three-year permits.

### How much will this approval cost?

Type of Approval	Application and renewal fees:
Application to agricultural land	\$175
Application to marginal land (reclamation site)	\$350
Innovative projects (topsoil creation and use or other innovative projects)	\$750
Research projects	\$25
Utilization at a sanitary landfill (for closure cap)	\$125
Disposal at a sanitary landfill (mix with solid waste or as cover material)	\$350
Transportation (to out of state or another WWTP)	\$45

Type of Approval	Application and renewal fees:
Burning (construct and operate an incinerator)	\$750
Storage Facility	\$350
Sewage sludge landfill (construct and operate)	\$350
Treatment (construct and operate PSRP, PFRP facility)	\$350
Handling (distribution of PFRP or other distribution)	\$750
Minor modification	\$40
Major modification	\$130

**Do I need to know any additional information?**

The Department may enter into a contract with a county, upon request, to provide supplemental inspections and monitoring of sewage sludge utilization activities. Sewage sludge that is utilized on land requires the written consent of the property owner.

**Who do I contact with additional questions?**

A.Hussain Alhija  
Solid Waste Program  
[Hussain.Alhija@maryland.gov](mailto:Hussain.Alhija@maryland.gov)  
(410) 537-3375

Related Link:

<http://www.mde.state.md.us/landpermits/pages/forms.aspx>