



COCONINO COUNTY ARIZONA

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Jay Christelman, Director

EFFECTIVE DATE: February 8, 2021

POLICY NAME: EQ BD Permit Separation

POLICY NO: EQ-2021-01

PURPOSE:

To clarify the circumstances and procedures for Environmental Quality (EQ) Division to sign off on a Building Division (BD) permit before EQ has issued an onsite wastewater permit.

BACKGROUND:

There are a wide range of properties and development configurations in Coconino County.

There are some large parcels, 10 acres or more, with few limiting conditions on the wastewater system for a single family residence. There are some tiny parcels, 7,000 square feet in Mountaineer, where the residence should be connected to a sewer system and not an onsite wastewater system. Then there is a range in between those extremes.

There are some areas such as Doney Park with known consistent soils that will be satisfactory for a conventional septic tank leach field with a rather small foot print on the parcel. There are some areas such as Fort Valley with known limiting conditions that will require an alternative system with a large foot print on the parcel if any option besides vault and haul is available. Again, there is a range if between those extremes.

At one extreme there is no real risk to the homeowner if EQ signs off on the BD permit before EQ has issued their permit. On the other extreme there is a very high risk to the home owner if EQ signs off on the BD permit before EQ has issued their permit. It is entirely possible, and has actually occurred, that the onsite wastewater system could not be constructed due to the location of the residence in which case the owner's only option is a vault and haul system. While that is inexpensive to construct it will cost hundreds of dollars per month to operate including the aesthetic issue of having a septic pumper in their driveway once a week.

The process for an onsite wastewater system requires two sequential permits: site investigation and Notice of Intent (application for construction permit). The process is longer than the BD permitting process. Often the BD permit has been reviewed and is ready for issuance before the EQ permit. (Sometimes the applicant has made the BD permit submittal before even starting the EQ permitting process which means the BD permit site plan is unacceptable for the absence of onsite wastewater information.)

POLICY:

EQ will not consider signing off on the BD permit unless the Site Investigation permit has been completed and a submittal for an onsite permit has been made to EQ. The applicant should focus on getting the submittal into EQ before trying to come up with a justification.

If submittals have been made to EQ and BD for their respective permits and both site plans show the onsite wastewater system in the same location and configuration then the applicant may make a request to EQ for them to sign off on the BD permit. EQ will NOT do an expedited or partial review but will look at the site plans and consider the general known conditions in the area. If EQ is certain that the applicant can gain approval to construct then EQ may sign off on the BD permit. It is a subjective decision that is not based upon a review of the submittal and there is no appeal. (If a decision is made to NOT sign off on the BD permit then no further EQ action will be taken until the initial review of the EQ submittal is done.)

If an initial review has been completed by EQ on the submittal and an RFAI has been issued then the applicant may make a request to EQ for them to sign off on the BD permit. (That request should not be made if the BD and EQ site plans do not show the onsite wastewater system in the same location.) EQ will consider the comments made in the Request for Additional Information (RFAI). If EQ is certain that the applicant can gain approval to construct then EQ may sign off on the BD permit. While still a subjective decision it is far more objective since a substantive review has been completed. There is no appeal. (If a decision is made to NOT sign off on the BD permit then no further EQ action will be taken until the EQ permit is issued.)

ACCESS:

This substantive policy statement is available for inspection at the Community Development office or on the Coconino County website: www.coconino.az.gov.

APPROVED BY:



Jay Christelman
Director, Coconino County Community Development Director

2.9.2021

Date