



TOWN OF DUXBURY

BOARD OF HEALTH
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TITLE 5 INSPECTION Q & A

When do I need a Title 5 Inspection?

A Title 5 Inspection is required before the sale or expansion of your dwelling. In Duxbury, any addition greater than 50 square feet, even if it does not increase the flow to your current system, requires a Title 5 Inspection. Inground swimming pools, detached garages and enclosed porches all require a Title 5 Inspection. The Board of Health, the Department of Environmental Protection or a court may order a homeowner to perform a Title 5 Inspection at any time.

Why are Title 5 Inspections required?

Failing septic systems and cesspools are a major cause of contaminated drinking water, tainted shellfish beds and polluted beaches. Required Title 5 Inspections protect you, your family and your neighbors from these public health threats.

What is a Title 5 Inspection?

A Title 5 Inspection provides the homeowner and the Board of Health with sufficient information to make a determination as to whether the system is adequate to protect public health and the environment. At a minimum, all the manhole covers and cleanouts must be exposed. This means that the covers to all cesspools, septic tanks, distribution boxes and pits must be exposed for the inspection.

Who does the inspection?

The Title 5 Inspector is a private contractor that you hire. Only certain professionals are allowed to perform Title 5 Inspections. They include professionals who meet experience requirements and have passed a Department of Environmental Protection Exam, Registered Sanitarians and Registered Professional Engineers, who specialize in civil, environmental or sanitary engineering. For a list of qualified system inspectors, contact the Board of Health office.

How do I choose a Title 5 Inspector?

Before you hire anyone, do some comparison shopping. Get estimates from several inspectors. Make sure to ask if the price of the inspection includes pumping the system. Check each inspector's identification and references. Before you sign any contract, be absolutely certain that it spells out precisely what work is going to be done, how much it is going to cost, what the payment terms are, and what, if any, guarantee the inspector is willing to provide. Once the inspection is complete, make sure the person who signs the inspection form is the same person who conducted the inspection.

Does Duxbury have any Title 5 Inspection regulations more stringent than Title 5?

Yes. Ask the inspector if he/she has a copy of Duxbury's Rules & Regulations. Duxbury requires that all seepage pits are exposed and inspected: Cesspools in Duxbury are an automatic failure. Seasonal high groundwater must be determined and a soil evaluation may be required. All these things may affect the cost of the inspection.

What is the difference between Title 5 and Duxbury Rules & Regulations?

The State Environmental Code Title 5: Minimum Requirements for the Subsurface Disposal of Sanitary Sewage, or just Title 5, is a State Code. Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 111, Section 31, allows the local board of health to adopt regulations that are more stringent than the State Code. In Duxbury, these are called Duxbury Supplementary Rules & Regulations. A copy of Duxbury Supplementary Rules & Regulations can be obtained from the Duxbury Board of Health.

My Title 5 Inspection passed, now what?

A copy of the inspection report must be delivered to the Board of Health office within 30 days of the date of inspection. The Health Agent will review the inspection report. If there are any deficiencies, the Health Agent will send the report back to the inspector with a letter asking for corrections and forward a copy of the letter to the homeowner. The report will become part of the property file. Copies of the inspection report can be obtained from the Board of Health office.

How long is a Title 5 Inspection valid for?

A Title 5 Inspection is valid for two years from the date of inspection. The inspection will be valid for three years, if it is pumped annually over the three-year period. There are different rules for condominiums. If you have a question about condos, please call the Board of Health office.

My septic system failed, now what?

Title 5 allows up to two years for the upgrade of a system, as long as the system is not posing a public health hazard. Systems that pose a public health hazard must be upgraded sooner. The Board of Health has a pamphlet called, "I Need a New Title 5 Septic Q&A", which answers the most frequently asked questions about installing a new septic system.

For more information contact:

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