

Holding Tanks

Q: What is the minimum volume capacity required for a holding tank?

A: The minimum volume capacity for a holding tank is 4,500 litres (1,000 gallons). If low water use toilets are installed in the building the minimum volume is 3,400 litres (750 gallons).

Q: What type of holding tank do I have to install?

A: Holding tanks must be certified in accordance with the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standard B66 – *Design, material, and manufacturing requirements for prefabricated septic tanks and sewage holding tanks*. Holding tanks can be constructed of concrete, fibreglass or polyethylene and must bear a valid stamp or mark indicating certification in accordance with CSA standard B66.

Q: Do I need approval to install a holding tank?

A: Yes. A registration application to install a holding tank must be submitted to the local environment officer for approval before a holding tank can be installed. Holding tank application forms can be found on the website under Application Forms and Worksheets.

Q: Are there any restrictions on where holding tanks can be used?

A: Yes. Holding tanks are not permitted in areas where:

- municipal collection systems are available
- mobile pump out service by a registered sewage hauler is unavailable (e.g., water access only),
- the location of the holding tank prevents servicing by mobile pump out equipment, and
- where a licenced wastewater facility for the final treatment and disposal of the wastewater is not available.

Q: Pumping out holding tanks can be expensive. Where can I find information on sizing holding tanks to minimize pump out costs?

A: There is a holding tank information manual on the website under Regulations, Standards and Guidelines.

Q: Who do I contact to pump out my holding tank?

A: Holding tanks must be pumped out by a registered sewage hauler. There is a list of registered sewage haulers on the website.

Q: How do I know when my holding tank needs to be pumped out?

A: It is recommended that an audible/visual alarm system be installed to notify the owner when the holding tank(s) is about 75% full. Without an alarm system, the owner will need to inspect the tank periodically to determine when it needs to be pumped out. Please contact a certified installer or a supplier for information on alarm systems.

Q: What are the setback distances from a holding tank?

A: Holding tanks need to meet the following setback distances as measured from the nearest sidewall of the tank:

- 1 m (3.25 ft) from a building
- 3 m (10 ft) from the nearest property boundary
- 8 m (26 ft) from a well
- 3 m (10 ft) from a cistern
- 15 m (50 ft) from a water course
- 8 m (26 ft) from a cut or embankment
- 3 m (10 ft) from a swimming pool

Q: If I can't meet the required setback distances can I get a variance?

A: Possibly. Variance requests are considered on a case-by-case basis with the exception of setback distances from a building, which cannot be reduced due to requirements in the Building Code. Please contact an environment officer for assistance.

Q: Can I install my holding tank under a deck?

A: No. The Building Code prohibits the installation of holding tanks under decks.

Q: I want to install a holding with a capacity of 9,000 litres (2,000 gal). Can I use two 4,500 litre (1,000 gal) tanks?

A: Yes. Two or more holding tanks can be installed in series (outlet of first tank to inlet of second tank) to obtain the desired storage capacity.

Q: I want to relocate an existing holding tank on my property, am I required to submit a new registration form?

A: Yes, you will be required to submit a new registration application for approval. The tank must be certified in accordance with CSA standard B66 and be in good structural condition (no cracks, leaks or other damage).

Q: Can I install a holding tank above ground?

A: Yes, provided the tank is certified in accordance with CSA standard B66 for above ground installation and the tank is registered and installed in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications.

Q: I have high groundwater conditions on my property. What impact could this have on the installation and operation of my holding tank?

A: High ground conditions can cause tanks to become unstable and in some cases, they can be pushed up out of the ground. The entrance of ground water into the tank and the exfiltration of wastewater out of the tank are also potential concerns. Please contact your tank manufacturer for specifications on how to anchor and install tanks in high ground water conditions.

Q: Can I install a used holding tank?

A: Yes, provided the tank is certified in accordance with CSA standard B66, is structurally sound, and is installed by a certified installer. Once installed, the certified installer should perform a water test to confirm the tank is water tight. Please be advised that the installation of used holding tanks is not recommended due to the potential damage that can occur during excavation and relocation.

Q: My residence is currently connected to a holding tank. If I were to build a guest house, granny suite or garage, can I connect it to the existing tank?

A: Yes, provided there isn't a municipal by-law requiring the use of separate holding tanks. If gravity flow from the new building to the existing tank is not possible, a pump system equipped with a grinder pump will be required.

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