Maintenance of Privies

Privies should be kept in a clean and sanitary condition and maintained so that insects and rodents cannot enter the chamber. This is important because insects and rodents act as vectors and can carry and spread disease.

Vault privies need to be pumped when the contents get to within 1 foot of the top of the vault. Pumping and disposal of the contents must be done in accordance with Chapter NR113 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code. Earthen pit privies are not permitted in Vernon County.

Abandonment of privies

When the useful life or need of a privy has ended the privy should be properly abandoned. The structure over the privy should be removed. The contents of the privy should be pumped out and disposed of by a Licensed Septic Pumper. The empty vault should be filled with soil or other inert material to prevent someone from falling in the hole. The county should be notified that the privy has been abandoned.

Privy Alternatives

Privies are not the only option available for human waste disposal for properties with buildings that do not have plumbing installed in them. Other options include: portable restrooms, composting toilets and incinerating toilets. These types of systems require an affidavit of non-plumbing.

Privy Application Checklist

County Sanitary Permit Application filled out and submitted to the Zoning Office along with the permit fee. ($250.00)

Site Plan showing proposed location of privy relative to all buildings, lot lines, well, roads, rivers, lakes or streams. Vernon County will provide an aerial photo for use in fulfilling this requirement.

Privy Installation Agreement filled out, signed, notarized, and submitted to the Vernon County Register of Deeds with $30.00 filing fee at 400 Courthouse Square, Viroqua, WI 54665.

OUTHOUSES & PRIVIES

Outdoor Toilet Options and Requirements
Vernon County, WI

Vernon County Zoning
318 Fairlane Dr., Ste 226
Viroqua, WI 54665
(608) 637-5270

What is a Privy?

A Privy (Outhouse) is a non-portable outdoor toilet that is enclosed and serves as a receptacle for non-water carried human wastes. The installation of privies is regulated in order to protect human health, the environment and to prevent conflicts between neighbors.

Using a Privy vs. a Septic System

Wisconsin law requires the issuance of a sanitary permit and the installation of a septic system for all structures that have running water and plumbing fixtures receiving and discharging wastewater through piping. If you have a water supply connected to piping in your building you need a septic system. (Note: "Wastewater" includes black and gray water. Separate gray water systems are illegal.)

If a property has buildings that have no plumbing and are not connected to running water a privy (outhouse) may be used as a toilet only. No plumbing, piping or drains shall be installed in a privy. The Vernon County Private Onsite Wastewater Ordinance requires that a county sanitary permit be obtained for a privy.

Types of Privies

Earthen Pit Privy: Not allowed in Vernon County.

Vault Privy: An outdoor toilet that receives non-water carried human wastes in a watertight chamber or vault. No soil test is required for a vault privy.

A COUNTY SANITARY PERMIT IS REQUIRED FOR A PRIVY

How do I get a Privy Permit?

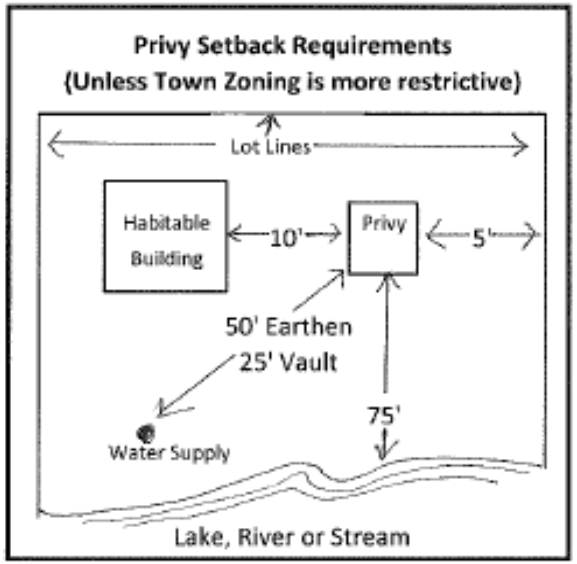
(1) Contact the Zoning Office for a County Sanitary Permit Application.
(2) In order to maintain records and keep future owners informed that there is no septic system on the premises, a Privy Agreement needs to be filed with the county. This document needs to be signed in the presence of a notary public and filed with the Register of Deeds. (Filing fee required).
(3) To facilitate and speed the issuance of a privy permit a detailed site plan needs to be submitted. This plan needs to show the location of the proposed privy in relation to all buildings, lot lines, roads, etc.

Storage Chamber Requirements

- Vault must have a minimum capacity of 200 gallons.
- Vault needs to be watertight.
- Vault needs to be constructed of concrete, fiberglass, polyethylene or steel and meet the requirements of SPS 384.25
- Vault needs to be properly anchored against flotation in saturated soils.

Venting Requirements

- The storage chamber of a vault privy needs to be properly vented to prevent the buildup of explosive gases.
- Vent must be at least 3 inches in diameter.
- Vent shall terminate at least 12 inches above roof.
- Vent shall be screened to keep insects out.

Siting Requirements

- 10 feet from a dwelling
- 5 feet from a lot line
- 25 feet from a water supply well
- 75 feet from a Lake, River, Stream
- May not be located in a floodplain.
- Privies constructed for public use must also meet the requirements of SPS 362.29