



MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE
Development Services Department
Onsite Water and Wastewater Section

Informational Bulletin

DATE: January 3, 2024

TO: Onsite Water and Wastewater Engineers
Onsite Water and Wastewater Installers
Real Estate Agents

FROM: Ross Noffsinger, Engineering Services Manager and Acting Building Official

SUBJECT: **ADEC Regulation 18 AAC 72.015 and Existing Cribs Utilizing Wood Components**

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) adopted updated wastewater disposal regulations on October 1, 2023. Section 18 AAC 72.015 reads as follows:

18 AAC 72.015. Restrictions on use and modification.

(a) A person may not install, modify, or use a cesspool for wastewater treatment or disposal.

(b) A person may not install, modify, or repair a wastewater collection or disposal system utilizing wood components in contact with wastewater.

(c) A modified existing system must meet the requirements of this chapter.

(Eff. 4/1/99, Register 149; am 5/12/2016, Register 218; am 10/1/2023, Register 247)

Furthermore, the ADEC Onsite Wastewater Systems Installation Manual published on October 13, 2023, states:

1.5.1 Log Cribs and Cesspools

A log crib is a type of subsurface disposal system that consists of an excavation with wood (railroad ties, timbers, limbed trees, plywood, etc.) used to shore up the excavation prior to burial, creating a large void below ground. While the practice of installing log cribs has not been an acceptable standard for several decades, there are still many log cribs in use throughout the state. A disposal system utilizing wood in contact with wastewater is no longer allowed to be installed, repaired, or modified under 18 AAC 72.015. This regulation utilizes an approach to phase out the use of an

outdated disposal system but does not require immediate replacement of a functioning log crib. Existing cribs that are still operating in a manner protective of public health may be left in service until such time as a failure occurs. A failure of a log crib includes a lid or sidewall collapse and back up or surfacing of effluent. *A log crib must also be replaced with any other modification such as a septic tank or lift station replacement, or when additional service connections are added. A change of use may also require a log crib be replaced.*

Cesspools are disposal areas that receive untreated wastewater. Cesspools have been prohibited from use for several decades. When a cesspool is discovered, it must immediately be decommissioned and replaced with a wastewater treatment and disposal system meeting the requirements of 18 AAC 72.

There are no exceptions to this requirement.

MOA Onsite Water and Wastewater Position: Please note the underlined/italicized portions of text. In accordance with the ADEC/MOA Deferral Agreement, the MOA will conform with ADEC regulations. Cribs utilizing wood components are subject to decommissioning as outlined by ADEC regulations.