

## **STEPS FOR HEALTH OFFICERS TO FOLLOW**

### **IF THEY SUSPECT A SEPTIC SYSTEM IS IN FAILURE**

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1. Visit the site and look for signs of a failed system.
2. Dye the toilet facilities to prove that sewage from the house is surfacing near the septic system.
3. If dye testing is not feasible, but there is liquid at the surface, take a sample and have it analyzed for fecal coliform at a state certified laboratory. Phosphate analysis may also be helpful to indicate human waste, separate from natural fecal counts.
4. If dye testing or lab analyses indicate the presence of sewage, (greater than 2,400 MPN of total coliform bacteria, or greater than 406 E. Coli bacteria per 100 ml. of sample) the system is likely in failure.
5. Prepare a **Letter of Deficiency** stating that the septic system was identified in failure and give the owner a defined time (e.g. 30 days) to correct the situation. Send the homeowner two copies of the letter: one copy for their files; one copy which they are to give to their septic system designer when applicable. (See the example in the Attachments.)
6. If the septic system is not replaced within the required time, the health officer should issue an **Order**. (See the example in the Attachments.)
7. If the septic system is still not replaced, the town may have its attorney present the case in the Superior Court.
8. The town may elect to appropriate funds, correct the problem at the town's expense, and then recover costs as per RSA 147:17-b and RSA 147:7b. A lien would be put against the property deed.