

Environmental Health Division Update – December 2025

The Assistant Director of Environmental Health has been elected to serve as Secretary for the Colorado Food Program Managers and is also involved in two subcommittees for the Conference for Food Protection. Subcommittee efforts involve working upstream during the retail food plan review process to identify ways to incorporate allergen protections during facility build-outs. As part of the Issues Committee, we are examining the review of 2025's Denver Conference and implementation of process improvements for the future Food Protection Conference in 2027 located in Grand Rapids.

Many properties in Douglas County are served by Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS) which have septic tanks that should be pumped out every 3-5 years as part of their routine maintenance. Options are limited on where this pumped out septage can be properly disposed of in Colorado and various issues arise from having a lack of options – such as illegal dumping.

Following a complaint received by a member of the public regarding suspected illegal septage dumping that occurred on a property in the county, Environmental Health reached out to CDPHE and teamed up with the Zoning, Public Works, and the Douglas County Sheriff's to investigate. Partners explored statutes and enforcement capabilities to ensure that this issue was addressed to the extent allowed under the law.

As part of the Colorado Directors of Environmental Health, the Assistant Director of Environmental Health was able to complete a site visit at West Montrose Sanitation District to discuss how the city and county invested in the infrastructure of this sanitation district to address the lack of options on the western slope. The added revenue collected from properly disposed of septage was found to help stabilize the monthly sewer fees and lowered the cost for septic waste haulers by offering a closer, more local option. These savings could also be passed on to customers and would then encourage more people to pump and maintain their septic systems.

Our Water Team has reviewed the proposed Onsite Wastewater Treatment System regulations (Reg. 43) which set the minimum standards for how OWTS systems are regulated statewide. These updated regulations are anticipated to go into effect June 15, 2025. DCHD anticipates the need for adopting a local regulation and will have up to one year from the effective date to adopt local regulations. A proposed timeline for adoption of local regulations will be completed following the *Procedures to Adopt or Revise Regulations by the Local Board of Health* in the upcoming months.

House Bill 25-1295 Food Truck Operations also passed. This bill established a definition of what a mobile food establishment is and allows for reciprocity of various food truck licenses between jurisdictions across the state. The largest impact for local health departments will be the acceptance of Denver Licenses starting January 1, 2026.

During the last quarter, Environmental Health has continued to train and upskill Environmental Health Specialists and will be working to further cross-train. The team is focused on training the newest hires in the various EH programs and expanding our depth and breadth of knowledge amongst our senior staff. We continue to collaborate with CDPHE for training and the official signoffs needed for new inspectors to conduct independent inspections.

- 1 EH Specialist is finishing their training in the OWTS Program.
- 1 EH Specialist is signed off in the Child Care Program.

Since September, EH has:

- Conducted 416 inspections
 - 5 Body Art inspections
 - 40 Childcare facility inspections
 - 21 Recreational Water inspections
 - 269 Retail Food Establishment inspections
 - Licensed 35 Special Event Vendors
- Assisted restaurant owners and builders with 31 plan reviews
- Responded to 40 complaints
- Issued 175 permits
 - Issued 28 New Installation OWTS permits
 - Issued 8 Major Repair OWTS permits
 - Issued 32 Minor Repair OWTS permits
 - Issued 105 OWTS Use permits
- Reviewed 23 Land Use referrals