



**IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES**  
Read all DNR news releases at: [www.iowadnr.gov/news/](http://www.iowadnr.gov/news/)

**June 18, 2009**  
**For immediate release**

- 1. EDITOR'S NOTE: Monthly fuel price press releases changing**
- 2. New law requires pre-sale inspections for buildings with septic tanks**

**EDITOR'S NOTE:**

The Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Energy Bureau has merged with the Iowa Office of Energy Independence. DNR will no longer issue monthly fuel price press releases. If you would like to continue receiving fuel price and other energy related news, contact Jessica Zopf, Iowa Office of Energy Independence, at [Jessica.zopf@iowa.gov](mailto:Jessica.zopf@iowa.gov). All energy related information is now available at [www.energy.iowa.gov](http://www.energy.iowa.gov).

###

**NEW LAW REQUIRES PRE-SALE INSPECTIONS FOR BUILDINGS WITH SEPTIC TANKS**

**MEDIA CONTACT: Dan Olson, (515) 281-8263 or [daniel.olson@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:daniel.olson@dnr.iowa.gov)**

DES MOINES – Starting July 1, with very few exceptions, all homes and buildings using septic systems must pass an inspection prior to finalizing a sale.

“Over time, these inspections will help eliminate the more than 100,000 substandard septic tanks that are piped directly to a ditch or tile line,” said Daniel Olson, DNR’s septic system program manager. “This will help protect people, particularly children, from coming into contact with raw sewage.”

The law will ensure that septic systems have both a septic tank, and a functioning leach field, sand filter or other treatment device. Systems that do not have treatment following the septic tank are not grandfathered in. Instead, they must be upgraded when the property is transferred.

However, older systems that function properly during an inspection will not have to upgrade. Often smaller than current code requires, functioning systems do not pose as great a threat to people or the environment because they are not sending wastes directly into a ditch or stream.

Olson expects that the new law will help decrease high bacteria levels—often one million to 100 million parts per million from just one septic tank—that enter streams. “This is especially important in rural subdivisions and small towns where children or pets may be playing in road ditches,” he said.

The sewage is a potential pollutant source for drinking water systems. It can also kill fish and other aquatic life, because it uses up oxygen as it breaks down in a stream.

Olson advises homeowners to schedule an inspection with a certified inspector early in the sale process. If the system needs upgrading, it will not delay the sale but could affect the selling price as upgrades are negotiated.

There are 208 certified inspectors in Iowa. The DNR is also training certified inspectors and anticipates adding more before the July 1 law change. If considering a sale, contact a real estate agent or find a list of inspectors at [www.wastewatertraining.com](http://www.wastewatertraining.com) or [www.iowadnr.gov/tot.html](http://www.iowadnr.gov/tot.html)

There are some exemptions to the inspections: transfer from parent to child or between joint tenants, and in divorce settlements or foreclosures. For other exemptions and more information, check the DNR Web site listed above.