CHAPTER 145
PLUMBING AND FIRE PROTECTION SYSTEMS AND SWIMMING POOL PLAN REVIEW

145.01 Definitions. (a) " Definitions."

145.02 Powers of department.

145.04 Water and sewerage systems.

145.045 Certification of soil testers.

145.05 Plumbing supervisors, supervision.

145.06 License or registration required; exemptions.

145.07 Licenses and registration; examinations.

145.08 Fees; expiration of license; registration.

145.09 State compty.

145.10 Investigations, hearings; suspension, revocation.

145.11 Advertising restrictions.

145.12 Prohibitions and penalties.

145.14 Plumbers license (restricted).

145.15 Licenses.

145.16 Fire sprinkler system apprentices, registration.

145.165 Automatic fire sprinkler fitter—maintenance only registration.

145.17 Inspectors and rule making.

145.175 Automatic fire sprinkler—maintenance only registration.

145.18 Temporary permits.

145.19 Sanitary permits.

145.195 Building on unsewered property.

145.20 Private on-site wastewater treatment systems.

145.23 Rules.

145.24 Variances.

145.26 Public swimming pool plan review.

(b) The discharge of sewage into zones of saturation that adversely affects the operation of a private on-site wastewater treatment system.

(c) The discharge of sewage to a drain tile or into zones of bedrock.

(d) The discharge of sewage to the surface of the ground.

(e) The failure to accept sewage discharges and back up of sewage into the structure served by the private on-site wastewater treatment system.

(f) Governmental unit responsible for regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems. "Governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems" or "governmental unit", unless otherwise qualified, means the county except that in a county with a population of 750,000 or more these terms mean the city, village or town where the private on-site wastewater treatment system is located.

(g) Journeyman automatic fire sprinkler fitter. "Journeyman automatic fire sprinkler fitter" means any person other than an automatic fire sprinkler contractor who is engaged in the practical installation of automatic fire sprinkler systems.

(h) Journeyman plumber. "Journeyman plumber" means any person other than a master plumber, who is engaged in the practical installation of plumbing.

(i) Master plumber. "Master plumber" means any person skilled in the planning, superintending and the practical installation of plumbing and familiar with the laws, rules and regulations governing the same.

(j) Pipelayer. "Pipelayer" means a person registered under s. 145.07 (11).

(k) Plumbing. "Plumbing" means:

1. All piping, fixtures, appliances, equipment, devices, and appurtenances in connection with water supply systems, water distribution systems, wastewater drainage systems, reclaimed water systems, and stormwater use systems, including hot water storage tanks, water treatment devices, and water heaters connected with these systems and also includes the installation thereof.

2. The construction, connection, installation, service, or repair of any drain or wastewater piping system that connects to the mains or other terminal within the bounds of, or beneath an area subject to easement for highway purposes, including private on-site wastewater treatment systems and stormwater treatment and disposal systems, and the alteration of any such systems, drains or wastewater piping.

3. The construction, connection, installation, service, or repair of water service piping that connects to the main or other water utility service terminal within the bounds of, or beneath an area subject to easement for highway purposes and its connections.

Cross-reference: See also chs. SPS 305, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, and 391, Wis. adm. code.
4. The water pressure system other than municipal systems as provided in ch. 281.

5. A plumbing and drainage system so designed and vent piping so installed as to keep the air within the system in free circulation and movement; to prevent with a margin of safety unequal air pressures of such force as might blow, siphon or affect trap seals, or retard the discharge from plumbing fixtures, or permit sewer air to escape into the building; to prohibit cross-connection, contamination or pollution of the water supply and distribution systems; and to provide an adequate supply of water to properly serve, cleanse and operate all fixtures, equipment, appurtenances and appliances served by the plumbing system.

(br) “Plumbing” does not include any of the following:

1. A rainwater gutter or downspout down to the point that it discharges into a plumbing system, a subsoil drain, or a foundation drain.

2. A process water reuse system if the process water reuse system is not connected to any plumbing fixture or appliance.

2m. A stormwater culvert under a roadway or walkway that is placed there only to equalize the water level from one end of the culvert to the other end.

3. The practical installation of process piping within a sewage disposal plant.

11. PLUMBING APPRENTICE. “Plumbing apprentice” means any person other than a journeyman or master plumber who is engaged in learning and assisting in the installation of plumbing and drainage.

12. PRIVATE ON-SITE WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM. “Private on-site wastewater treatment system” means a sewage treatment and disposal system serving a single structure with a septic tank and soil absorption field located on the same parcel as the structure.

13. REGISTERED LEARNER. “Registered learner” means a person, other than a restricted plumber licensee, who is learning a limited type of plumbing and is engaged in assisting a restricted plumber licensee.

14. RESTRICTED PLUMBER LICENSEE. “Restricted plumber licensee” means any person licensed as a master plumber (restricted) or a journeyman plumber (restricted) under s. 145.14.

15. UTILITY CONTRACTOR. “Utility contractor” means a person licensed under s. 145.07 (10).

17. WATERS OF THE STATE. “Waters of the state” means the meaning specified under s. 281.01 (18).

145.02 POWERS OF DEPARTMENT. (1) The construction, installation and maintenance of plumbing in connection with all buildings in this state, including buildings owned by the state or any political subdivision thereof, shall be safe, sanitary and such as to safeguard the public health and the waters of the state.

(2) (a) The department shall have general supervision of all plumbing described under sub. (1). The department shall promulgate rules that shall uniformly apply to all types of buildings, private or public, rural or urban, including buildings owned by the state or any political subdivision. The rules promulgated by the department shall constitute the state plumbing code. The state plumbing code shall comply with ch. 160. To the extent that the historic building code applies to the subject matter of these standards, the standards do not apply to a qualified historic building if the owner elects to be subject to s. 101.121. The standards do not apply to a primitive rural hunting cabin, as defined in s. 101.61 (3).

(b) The department shall promulgate rules that establish separate plumbing standards applicable only to camping units that are set in a fixed location in a campground for which a permit is issued under s. 97.67, that contain a sleeping place, and that are used for seasonal overnight camping. The standards established in the rules shall also take into account the uses, including seasonal use, that are unique to recreational and educational camps, as defined in s. 101.053 (1). If the department has appointed one or more committees under s. 227.13 to advise the department on rule making with respect to private on-site wastewater treatment systems or other plumbing systems, the department shall promulgate the rules required under this paragraph in consultation with those committees.

(3) The department may exercise such powers as are reasonably necessary to carry out the provisions of this chapter. It may, among other things:

(a) Employ competent supervisors who shall be licensed plumbers, and other assistants, prescribe their qualifications and assign their duties.

(b) Conduct investigations and experiments for the advancement of technical knowledge relating to plumbing and may hold public meetings and attend or be represented at such meetings within or without the state.

(c) Enter and inspect at reasonable hours plumbing installations on private or public property and may disseminate information relative to the provisions of this chapter.

(d) Prepare and cause to be printed such codes, bulletins or other documents as may be necessary and furnish copies thereof to those engaged in the plumbing business and to the public upon request.

(e) Furnish upon request of the owner of the building or of the plumber making the plumbing installation, recommendations or a certificate of inspection.

(f) Issue special orders directing and requiring compliance with the rules and standards of the department promulgated under this chapter whenever, in the judgment of the department, the rules or standards are threatened with violation, are being violated or have been violated, except that the department shall issue orders related to occupational licenses, as defined in s. 101.02 (1) (a) 2., as provided in s. 101.022. The circuit court for any county where violation of such an order occurs has jurisdiction to enforce and shall enforce any order brought before it by injunctive and other appropriate relief. The attorney general or the district attorney of the county where the violation of the order occurs shall bring action for its enforcement. The department may issue an order under this paragraph to abate a violation of s. 254.59.

(g) By rule, fix fees for the examination and approval of plans of plumbing systems and collect the same.

(h) Promulgate rules concerning the testing of cross-connection control devices, including rules identifying the types of cross-connection control devices that may be tested only by a registered cross-connection control test and the circumstances under which cross-connection control devices shall be tested.

(i) Term means a plumber, or restricted plumber licensees, for the registration of plumbing apprentices and journeymen plumbers and restricted plumber licensees, for the licensing of utility contractors, for the registration of plumbing apprentices and pipe layers and for the registration and training of registered learners. The plumbers council, created under s. 15.407 (16), shall advise the department in formulating the rules.

(j) The department may promulgate rules for the qualification and registration of cross-connection control testers.

5. (a) The department may appoint a city, village, town, or county as an agent of the department that is authorized to review and approve plumbing plans and specifications for plumbing installations specified by the department for public buildings, as defined in s. 101.01 (12), and places of employment, as defined in s. 101.01 (11).
145.05 Plumbing supervisors, supervision.  (1) The common council of a 1st, 2nd or 3rd class city with a water system or sewerage system or, the officer or board in charge, shall appoint one or more plumbing supervisors, who shall be licensed plumbers, and unless under civil service shall serve for a term of 4 years or more subject to removal for just cause except as otherwise provided by ordinance when first appointed, but need not renew their licenses while they continue in office.  The common council of a 4th class city, the board of a village, town or county or the commissioner in charge of any metropolitan sewerage district may appoint one or more plumbing supervisors who shall be practical plumbers, skilled sanitarians, or competent persons familiar with plumbing and unless under civil service shall serve for a term of 4 years or more subject to removal for just cause except as otherwise provided by ordinance.  They shall supervise all plumbing, new or alterations or repairs, and report to the appointing body violations of regulations, and perform such other appropriate duties as may be required.  Their compensation shall be fixed by the council, board or commission.

(2) If a water system or sewerage system is established in any city, village, town or metropolitan sewerage district which has not provided for a board or officer to supervise plumbing, drainage and sewerage, the department shall take immediate and entire control of plumbing, drainage and sewerage intended to be conducted with the water system or sewerage system, and exercise all the powers conferred by this section until such municipalities or district provides for such supervision.


Cross-reference: See also ss. SPS 305.90, 305.91, 305.92, 305.93, 305.94, 305.95, 305.96, 305.97, 305.98, and 305.99, Wis. adm. code.
145.07 Licenses and registration; examinations. 
(2) Application for a master or journeyman plumber’s examination, temporary permit or license shall be made to the department with fees. Unless the applicant is entitled to a renewal of license, a license shall be issued only after the applicant passes a satisfactory examination showing fitness. No such license or permit shall be transferable. 
(3) An applicant for examination for licensure as a master plumber shall submit evidence satisfactory to the department as follows: 
(a) A specific record of not less than 1,000 hours per year experience for 3 or more years as a licensed journeyman plumber in this state; or 
(b) Graduation in engineering from a school or college approved by the department. 
(4) An applicant for examination for licensure as a journeyman plumber shall submit evidence satisfactory to the department that he or she has completed a plumbing apprenticeship under s. 106.025. 
(5) Any resident who has been actively engaged in this state in a limited type of plumbing installation work for a period of not less than 1,000 hours per year for 2 or more years as a licensed journeyman plumber (restricted) may be examined for licensure as a master plumber (restricted). 
(6) Applicants for examination for licensure as a journeyman plumber (restricted) shall have completed one continuous year of work experience consisting of not less than 1,000 hours per year and give evidence of completion of shop training and related instruction as the department by rule requires. 
(7) A person shall be registered as a registered learner with the department without examination or training prequalifications and shall not be required to be employed under an apprentice contract under s. 106.01. 
(9) Master plumbers, journeyman plumbers and apprentices are not subject to the restrictions under s. 145.14. 
(10) An application for a utility contractor’s license shall be made to the department with fees required by the department under s. 145.08 (1) (o). The department shall issue a utility contractor’s license to any person who is skilled in the planning, superintending and practical installation, within public or private premises, of piping which conveys sewage, rain water or other liquid wastes to a legal point of disposal and who is skilled in the design, planning, superintending and practical installation of water service piping from the street main to the immediate inside building perimeter. 
(11) An application for registration as a pipelayer shall be made to the department with the fees required by the department under s. 145.08 (1) (q). The department shall approve the registration of any person as a pipelayer if the person is employed by a utility contractor and if the person is engaged in the practical installation, within public or private premises, of piping which conveys sewage, rain water or other liquid wastes to a legal point of disposal or engages in the practical installation of water service piping from the street main to the immediate inside building perimeter. 
(12) An applicant for registration as a cross—connection control tester shall submit an application and registration fee to the department as prescribed by the rules promulgated under s. 145.02 (4) (b). 

145.08 Fees; expiration of license; registration. 
(1) The department shall establish fees by rule for the examinations, licenses, and registrations specified in this section. The fees established by the department shall be as close as possible equal the cost of providing the following services: 
(a) Administering a master plumber’s examination. 
(b) Issuing a master plumber’s license. 
(c) Administering a journeyman plumber’s examination. 
(d) Issuing a journeyman plumber’s license. 
(e) Issuing a temporary permit pending examination and issuance of a license for master plumber or journeyman plumber. 
(f) Administering a master plumber’s (restricted) examination. 
(g) Issuing a master plumber’s license (restricted). 
(h) Administering a journeyman plumber’s (restricted) examination. 
(i) Issuing a journeyman plumber’s license (restricted). 
(k) Administering an automatic fire sprinkler contractor’s examination. 
(Lm) Issuing an automatic fire sprinkler contractor’s license. 
(m) Administering a journeyman automatic fire sprinkler fitter’s examination. 
(n) Issuing a journeyman automatic fire sprinkler fitter’s license. 
(nm) Issuing an automatic fire sprinkler fitter — maintenance only registration certificate. 
(o) Issuing a utility contractor’s license. 
(q) Issuing a pipelayer’s registration. 
(1) The department may charge a plumbing supervisor employed by the department in accord with s. 145.02 (3) (a) a fee for the appropriate 4-year license for which the plumbing supervisor has previously qualified. 
(2) No license or registration may be issued for longer than 4 years. Any license or registration may be renewed upon application made prior to the date of expiration. The department may renew licenses or registrations upon application made after the date of expiration if it is satisfied that the applicant has good cause for not applying for renewal prior to the date of expiration and upon payment of the renewal and additional fees prescribed. 
(3) To establish a record of beginning an apprenticeship, as a plumber, as an automatic fire sprinkler system apprentice, or as a plumber learner (restricted), every plumbing and automatic fire sprinkler system apprentice and every plumbing learner (restricted) shall within 30 days after beginning an apprenticeship or learnership register with the department. A fee established by the department by rule shall be paid at the time of registration and before January 1 of each subsequent calendar year during which the apprentice is engaged in the apprenticeship or learnership. 
(4) A 4-year master plumber’s license shall be issued for a master plumber (restricted) to whom all of the following apply: 
(a) The person holds a current license under the laws of any other state, or under the ordinances of any city, town or village, having license provisions governing plumbers that the department determines are substantially similar to the requirements of this chapter; or 
(b) The person has practical experience in plumbing in another state that the department determines is equivalent to the experience required under this chapter. 
(2m) The department shall accept for a journeyman plumber’s examination a person to whom all of the following apply: 
(a) The person completed a plumbing apprenticeship under s. 106.025 or under the laws of any other state. 
(b) The person passed a journeyman plumber’s examination in any other state. 
(c) The person has practiced for at least 5 years under a journeyman plumber’s license or equivalent license issued by another state having licensure provisions governing plumbers that the department determines are substantially similar to the requirements under this chapter and the rules promulgated under this chapter.
chapter, and the person has not been the subject of any disciplinary actions related to that license or any other equivalent license.

History: 1981 c. 60; 2017 a. 59.

145.10  Investigations, hearings; suspension, revocation.  (1)  The department may make investigations and conduct hearings and may, on its own or upon complaint in writing duly signed and verified by the complainant, and after providing not less than 10 days’ notice to the licensee, suspend any master or journeyman plumber’s license, cross-connection control tester’s registration, utility contractor’s license or temporary permit if it has reason to believe, and may revoke such license, registration or permit in the manner provided under this section if it finds, that the holder of such license, registration or permit has:

(a)  Made a material misstatement in the application for a license or registration or renewal thereof or for a temporary permit;

(b)  Failed to correct an installation for which he or she is responsible, at his or her own expense, within 30 days following notification by the department of a violation of any rule adopted under this chapter;

(c)  Falsified information on an inspection form under s. 145.20 (5).

(2)  A copy of the complaint with notice of the suspension of license, registration or permit shall be served on the person complained against, and the person’s answer to the complaint shall be filed with the department and the complainant within 10 days after service. The department shall thereupon set the matter for hearing as promptly as possible and within 30 days after the date of filing the complaint. Either party may appear at the hearing in person or by attorney or agent. The department shall make its findings and determination within 90 days after the date that the hearing is concluded and send a copy to each interested party.

(3)  No order revoking a license, registration or permit shall be made until after a public hearing to be held before the department at such place as the department designates. At least 10 days prior to the hearing the department shall send written notice of the time and place of the hearing to the licensee or permittee and to the person’s attorney or agent of record by mailing the notice to the last known address of such persons. The testimony presented and proceedings had at the hearing shall be recorded and preserved as the records of the department. The department shall as soon thereafter as possible make its findings and determination and send a copy to each interested party. One year after the date of revocation, application may be made for a new license or registration.


145.11  Advertising restrictions.  (1)  No person offering plumbing services may do any of the following, unless the person is a licensed master plumber or employs a licensed master plumber:

(a)  Advertise as a plumbing contractor, master plumber or plumber.

(b)  Append his or her name to, or in connection with, the title “plumbing contractor”, “master plumber” or “plumber”.

(c)  Append his or her name to any other title or words that may tend to represent the person as a plumbing contractor, master plumber or plumber.

(2)  No person other than a licensed master plumber shall use or display the title “Master Plumber” or append his or her name to or in connection with such title or any other title or words which represent or may tend to represent him or her as a licensed master plumber. Every holder of a master plumber’s license shall promptly notify the department of any change of his or her business address.


145.14  Plumbers license (restricted).  (1)  Limitations.

(a)  Persons licensed as master plumbers (restricted), journeyman plumbers (restricted) or registered learners shall be classified by
the department under sub. (2) and shall be restricted to the type of work for which they have been classified and to the requirements indicated in this section.

(b) Persons licensed as journeyman plumbers (restricted) or registered plumbers shall work under the supervision of a master plumber or a master plumber (restricted). A master plumber (restricted) may also work as a journeyman plumber (restricted).

No journeyman plumber (restricted) or registered plumber shall contract for work, advertise or do anything which would lead others to believe him to be qualified as a master plumber (restricted) in his classification.

(c) All persons licensed as master plumbers (restricted), journeyman plumbers (restricted) or registered plumbers shall be subject to all rules governing plumbers. If qualified, persons may employ competent supervisors, who shall be licensed automatic fire sprinkler fitters of the department under sub. (2). Separate licenses shall be issued under sub. (2) (a) and (b), but licenses issued under sub. (2) (b) may extend to any number of items under that paragraph.

(2) Classifications. The classifications which the department shall use are a sewer services classification and an “appliances, equipment and devices” classification. Persons so classified may engage in the following types of work:

(a) Systems or services. Persons classified under this paragraph may install septic tanks for private on-site wastewater treatment systems, may install drain fields designed to serve such septic tanks, and may install sewer service from the septic tank or sewer extensions from mains to the immediate inside or proposed inside foundation wall of the building. Such persons may also install water services, stormwater use systems, and reclaimed water systems if the services or systems are to be located outside the foundation wall of the building.

(b) Appliances, equipment or devices. Under this paragraph persons installing a water treatment device, a water heater, or any other item in connection with a water distribution system, including a stormwater use or reclaimed water system, which does not require a direct connection to a drain system are limited to making connections to existing installations. There shall be no drilling, tapping, or direct connection made to any waste or drain pipe to serve items installed under this section. The maximum length of water piping permitted to be installed under this section shall be the minimum required to connect the item to the system.

History: 2007 a. 147; 2009 a. 200; 2011 a. 146.

145.15 Licenses. (1) No city, village, town or county may require the licensing of any person licensed or registered under ss. 145.15 to 145.18 for any activity regulated under ss. 145.15 to 145.18 or rules adopted thereunder.

(2) All licenses issued under ss. 145.15 to 145.18 shall be issued by the department. The department shall not restrict the work done by any licensed journeyman sprinkler system fitter of any automatic fire sprinkler contractor or apprentice to any geographical territory.

(3) Any person not licensed under this chapter prior to April 26, 1972, who was regularly engaged in the occupation of installing automatic fire sprinkler systems on or before March 1, 1967, shall be licensed under ss. 145.15 to 145.18 without being required to pass any written, oral or practical examination qualifying the person for a license under ss. 145.15 to 145.18. Any such person shall apply for the appropriate license and pay the appropriate license fee.

(4) No person may install automatic fire sprinkler systems unless licensed or registered to do so by the department. Licenses and registrations pertaining to automatic fire sprinkler systems are not transferable.


Cross-reference: See also ss. SPS 305.50, 305.51, and 305.52, Wis. adm. code.

145.16 Fire sprinkler system apprentices, registration. Automatic fire sprinkler system apprentices may be required to apply for any license but shall register with the department as an apprentice. The apprentices shall be enrolled in a qualified apprenticeship sprinkler fitters program recognized by the department.

History: 1971 c. 255; 1979 c. 221.

Cross-reference: See also s. SPS 305.53, Wis. adm. code.

145.165 Automatic fire sprinkler fitter—maintenance only registration. (1) An automatic fire sprinkler fitter—maintenance only registration certificate is required for any person who is employed to maintain automatic fire sprinkler systems by a business establishment registered under s. 145.175. The department shall, by rule, specify the requirements for issuing an automatic fire sprinkler fitter—maintenance only registration certificate and specify the activities in which a person holding a certificate under this section may engage.

(2) This section does not apply to any person registered under s. 145.16 or licensed under s. 145.17 (2).

History: 1981 c. 20.

Cross-reference: See also ss. SPS 305.54 and 305.55, Wis. adm. code.

145.17 Inspectors and rule making. (1) The department may employ competent supervisors, who shall be licensed automatic fire sprinkler contractors or journeymen automatic fire sprinkler system fitters, and may employ other persons.

(2) The department shall prescribe rules as to the qualifications, examination and licensing of journeymen automatic fire sprinkler system fitters and automatic fire sprinkler contractors and for the registration and training of automatic fire sprinkler system apprentices. The automatic fire sprinkler system contractors and journeymen council, created under s. 15.407 (17), shall advise the department in formulating the rules.

History: 1971 c. 255; 1979 c. 102, 221; 1995 a. 27; 2011 a. 32, 146.

145.175 Automatic fire sprinkler—maintenance only registration. An automatic fire sprinkler—maintenance only registration certificate is required before any business establishment may maintain or repair existing automatic fire sprinkler systems in its physical facilities. The department shall, by rule, specify the qualifications for issuing an automatic fire sprinkler—maintenance only registration certificate. The department shall, by rule, specify the activities in which a person holding a registration certificate under this section may engage.

History: 1981 c. 20.

Cross-reference: See also ss. SPS 305.53, and 305.54, Wis. adm. code.

145.18 Temporary permits. The department may issue temporary permits to journeymen automatic fire sprinkler system fitters or to automatic fire sprinkler contractors pending examination of applicants for licenses. The department may also issue temporary permits to applicants for automatic fire sprinkler—maintenance only registration certificates. The department shall, by rule, prescribe the procedure for issuing these permits. Examination fees shall be paid at the time the permit is issued.


145.19 Sanitary permits. (1b) Definition. In this section, “sanitary permit” means a permit authorizing the installation of a private on-site wastewater treatment system that is issued by the department or any governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems.

(1g) Permit required. No person may purchase or install a private on-site wastewater treatment system unless the owner of the property on which the private on-site wastewater treatment system is to be installed holds a valid sanitary permit issued under this section. No person may sell at retail, as defined under s. 100.201 (1) (d), a septic tank for installation in this state unless the purchaser holds a valid sanitary permit issued under this section.

(1m) Application process. The department shall prescribe the information to be included in an application for a sanitary permit. The applicant shall submit the completed application for a sanitary permit to the governmental unit. The governmental unit
shall approve or disapprove the sanitary permit according to the rules promulgated by the department under this chapter.

(1r) Test Results. The results of any percolation test or other test relating to the disposal of liquid domestic wastes into the soil shall be retained by the governmental unit where the property is located. The governmental unit shall make the test results available to an applicant for a sanitary permit and shall accept the test results as the basis for a sanitary permit application unless the soil at the test site is altered to the extent that a new soil test is necessary.

(2) Fee. No fee for a sanitary permit may be less than the amount determined under department rule. The governing body for the governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems may establish a fee for a sanitary permit which is more than the amount determined under department rule. A governmental unit may not charge more than one fee for a sanitary permit or the renewal of a sanitary permit in any 12-month period.

(3) Fees and Records of Permits Forwarded to the Department. The governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems shall forward to the department within 90 days after each valid permit is issued a portion of the fee, as determined under department rule. The governmental unit shall also compile a periodic summary of the permits that it has issued. The summary shall contain the information required by the department by rule, and shall be submitted by the governmental unit to the department at intervals to be determined by the department by rule.

(3m) Notice in Permit. A sanitary permit shall include a notice displayed conspicuously and separately on the permit form, to inform the holder that:

(a) The purpose of the sanitary permit is to allow installation of the private on-site wastewater treatment system described in the permit.
(b) The approval of the sanitary permit is based on regulations in force on the date of approval.
(c) The sanitary permit is valid and may be renewed for a specified period.
(d) Changed regulations will not impair the validity of a sanitary permit.
(e) Renewal of the sanitary permit will be based on regulations in force at the time renewal is sought, and that changed regulations may impede renewal.

(f) The sanitary permit is transferable.

(4) Use of Fee. The portion of this fee retained by the governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems shall be used for the administration of private on-site wastewater treatment system programs.

(5) Groundwater Fee. In addition to the fee under sub. (2), the governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment system shall collect a groundwater fee of $25 for each sanitary permit. The governmental unit shall forward this fee to the department together with the fee under sub. (3). The moneys collected under this subsection shall be credited to the environmental fund for environmental management.

(7) Period of Validity. A sanitary permit is valid for 2 years from the date of issue and renewable for similar periods thereafter. A sanitary permit shall remain valid to the end of the established period, notwithstanding any change in the state plumbing code or in any private on-site wastewater treatment system ordinance during that period.

(8) Transfer of Permit. A sanitary permit may be transferred from the holder to a subsequent owner of the land, except that the subsequent owner must obtain a new copy of the sanitary permit from the issuing agent.

145.195 Building on unsewered property. (1) No county, city, town or village may issue a building permit for construction of any structure requiring connection to a private on-site wastewater treatment system unless a private on-site wastewater treatment system satisfying all applicable regulations already exists to serve the proposed structure or all permits necessary to install a private on-site wastewater treatment system have been obtained.

(2) Before issuing a building permit for construction of any structure on property not served by a municipal sewage treatment plant, the county, city, town or village shall determine that the proposed construction does not interfere with a functioning private on-site wastewater treatment system. The county, city, town or village may require building permit applicants to submit a detailed plan of the owner’s existing private on-site wastewater treatment system.

History: 1977 c. 258; 1999 a. 150 s. 87; Stats. 1999 s. 145.195; 2007 a. 147; 2011 a. 146; 2015 a. 197 s. 51.

NOTE: Chapter 258, laws of 1977, which created this section, contains a prefatory note.

Cross-reference: See also ch. SPS 383, Wis. adm. code.

An on-site inspection of an existing private sewage system must be made before a building permit may be issued for any type of construction requiring a connection to that system. 75 Atty. Gen. 38.

145.20 Private on-site wastewater treatment systems.

(1) Organization and Personnel. (a) The governing body of the governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems may assign the duties of administering the private on-site wastewater treatment system program to any office, department, committee, board, commission, position or employee of that governmental unit.

(a) The governing body of the governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems may delegate the duties of administering the private on-site wastewater treatment system program to a town sanitary district or public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district with the powers of a town sanitary district within the town sanitary district or public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district if the town sanitary district or public inland lake protection and rehabilitation district agrees to assume those duties.

(b) The governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems shall obtain the services of a certified soil tester, either as an employee or under contract, to review and verify certified soil tester reports under sub. (2).

(2) Governmental Unit Responsibilities. The governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems shall:

(a) Review certified soil tester reports for proposed private on-site wastewater treatment systems and verify the report at the proposed site, if necessary.

(b) Approve or disapprove applications for sanitary permits and assist applicants in preparing an approvable application.

(c) Issue written notice to each applicant whose sanitary permit application is disapproved. Each notice shall state the specific reasons for disapproval and amendments to the application, if any, which render the application approvable. Each notice shall also give notice of the applicant's right to appeal the procedures for conducting an appeal under ch. 68.

(d) Inspect all private on-site wastewater treatment systems after construction but before backfilling no later than the end of the next workday, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, after receiving notice from the plumber in charge.

(e) File reports and conduct surveys and inspections as required by the governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems or the department.

(f) Investigate violations of the private on-site wastewater treatment system ordinance and s. 254.59 (2), issue orders to abate
the violations and submit orders to the district attorney, corporation counsel or attorney general for enforcement.

(g) Perform other duties regarding private on-site wastewater treatment systems as considered appropriate by the governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems or as required by the rules of the department.

(h) Inspect existing private on-site wastewater treatment systems to determine compliance with s. 145.195 if a building or structure is being constructed which requires connection to an existing private on-site wastewater treatment system. The county is not required to conduct an on-site inspection if a building or structure is being constructed which does not require connection to an existing private on-site wastewater treatment system.

(i) Adopt and enforce the maintenance program under sub. (5).

(3) DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES. (a) The department may specify categories of private on-site wastewater treatment systems for which approval by the department is required prior to issuance of sanitary permits by the governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems.

2. The department may exempt a governmental unit from any category of private on-site wastewater treatment systems for which departmental approval is required prior to sanitary permit issuance under subd. 1., upon a determination, in accordance with rules promulgated by the department, that past performance of the governmental unit on reviews and audits under par. (b) has been satisfactory and that the governmental unit has the capacity to give the same level of application and plan review as that provided by the department. The department may revoke an exemption upon a finding that performance of the governmental unit on a review or audit conducted subsequent to the granting of the exemption is unsatisfactory or that the governmental unit is not giving the same level of application and plan review as that provided by the department. Findings in a revocation action may be made only after a public hearing upon 30 days’ advance notice to the clerk of the governmental unit. The department shall submit a report under s. 13.172 (2) to the chief clerk of each house of the legislature, at the beginning of each legislative session, describing the exemptions under this subdivision.

(b) The department shall review the private on-site wastewater treatment system program in each governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems to ascertain compliance with sub. (2) and with regulations issued by the department. This review shall include a random audit of sanitary permits, including verification by on-site inspection.

(c) If the governing body for a governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems does not adopt a private on-site wastewater treatment system ordinance meeting the requirements of s. 59.70 (5) or if the governmental unit does not appoint personnel meeting the requirements of sub. (1) or if the governmental unit does not comply with the requirements of sub. (2) or s. 145.19 (3), the department may conduct hearings in the county seat upon 30 days’ notice to the county clerk. As soon as practicable after the public hearing, the department shall issue a written decision regarding compliance with s. 59.70 (5) or 145.19 (3) or sub. (1) or (2). If the department determines that there is a violation of these provisions, the governmental unit may not issue a sanitary permit for the installation of a private on-site wastewater treatment system until the violation is corrected.

(d) The department shall conduct training and informational programs for officials of the governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems and employees and persons licensed under this chapter and s. 281.48 and certified as operators of septage servicing vehicles under s. 281.17 (3) to improve the delivery of service under the private on-site wastewater treatment system program. The department shall obtain the assistance of the Wisconsin counties association in planning and conducting the training and informational programs.

(4) SPECIAL ASSESSMENT FOR HOLDING AND SEPTIC TANK PUMPING. A governmental unit may assess the owner of a private on-site wastewater treatment system for costs related to the pumping of a septic or holding tank. The governmental unit shall make any assessment in the same manner that a city, village or town makes an assessment under s. 66.0703.

(5) MAINTENANCE. (a) The department shall establish a maintenance program to be administered by governmental units responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems. The department shall determine the private on-site wastewater treatment systems to which the maintenance program applies. At a minimum the maintenance program is applicable to all new or replacement private on-site wastewater treatment systems constructed in a governmental unit after the date on which the governmental unit adopts this program. The department may apply the maintenance program by rule to private on-site wastewater treatment systems constructed in a governmental unit responsible for the regulation of private on-site wastewater treatment systems on or before the date on which the governmental unit adopts the program.

(a) The department may exempt a governmental unit from the maintenance program if the governmental unit demonstrates that it is not capable of maintaining the required frequency of inspection, maintenance, and pumping for each type of private on-site wastewater treatment system that does not have a maintenance plan and shall periodically update the methods.

(c) The department of natural resources may suspend or revoke a license issued under s. 281.48 or a certificate issued under s. 281.17 (3) to the operator of a septage servicing vehicle or if the department of natural resources finds that the licensee or operator falsified information on inspection forms. The department of safety and professional services may suspend or revoke the license of a plumber licensed under this chapter, a person licensed under s. 281.48 or by an employee of the state or governmental unit designated by the department, and the department may determine by rule other persons who are qualified to undertake required inspection, maintenance, or repairs. The department shall specify the methods to establish the required frequency of inspection, maintenance, and pumping for each type of private on-site wastewater treatment system that does not have a maintenance plan and shall periodically update the methods.

(6) RESTRICTIONS ON REVIEWERS AND INSPECTORS. (a) Except as provided in par. (b), a governmental unit employee who has responsibilities related to any of the activities under sub. (2) (a) to (i) may not do any of the following in the county in which the employee is employed or in an adjacent county:

1. Conduct any activities for which certification is required under s. 145.045 (1), except that the employee may review and verify soil tester reports as provided in sub. (2) (a).

2. Install, design, maintain, repair, or sell a private on-site wastewater treatment system, component of a private on-site wastewater treatment system, drain field designed to serve a private on-site wastewater treatment system, or pipe from a private on-site wastewater treatment system to the immediate inside of the existing or proposed foundation wall of the building served by the private on-site wastewater treatment system.
(b) Paragraph (a) does not apply to activities performed by an employee on property owned by the employee that is outside of the governmental unit for which the employee works.


Cross-reference: See also ch. SPS 383, Wis. adm. code.

145.23 Rules. The department may make and enforce rules relating to lot size and lot elevation necessary for proper sanitary conditions in the development and maintenance of subdivisions not served by a public sewer, where provision for such service has not been made.

History: 1979 c. 221 ss. 607, 649.

145.24 Variances. (1) If an existing private on-site wastewater treatment system either is not located in soil meeting the siting standards or is not constructed in accordance with design standards promulgated under s. 145.02, the owner of the private on-site wastewater treatment system may petition the department for a variance to the siting or design standards.

(2) The department shall establish procedures for the review and evaluation of existing private on-site wastewater treatment systems which do not comply with siting or design standards.

(3) Upon receipt of a petition for a variance, the department shall require the owner of the private on-site wastewater treatment system to submit information necessary to evaluate the request for a variance. If the department determines that the existing private on-site wastewater treatment system is not a failing private on-site wastewater treatment system, and continued use of the existing private on-site wastewater treatment system will not pose a threat of contamination of waters of the state, then the department may issue a variance to allow continued use of the existing private on-site wastewater treatment system. The department shall rescind the variance if the existing private on-site wastewater treatment system becomes a failing private on-site wastewater treatment system or contaminates waters of the state.


145.26 Public swimming pool plan review. (1) In this section, “public swimming pool” means a fixed or mobile structure, basin, chamber, or tank and appurtenant buildings and equipment that serve or are installed for use by the state, a political subdivision of the state, a motel, a hotel, a resort, a camp, a club, an association, a housing development, a school, a religious, charitable, or youth organization, an educative or rehabilitative facility, or another entity. “Public swimming pool” does not mean an inflated mobile structure, basin, chamber, or tank; a swim pond; an individual therapeutic pod, tub, or bath; or a fixed or mobile structure, basin, chamber, or tank that serves fewer than 3 individual residences.

(2) The department shall, in advance of construction, alteration or reconstruction, review and approve plans and specifications for the construction, alteration or reconstruction of public swimming pools or water recreation attractions or the alteration of public swimming pool equipment in this state.

(3) The department shall require payment of fees that are established by rule for the review of plans and specifications for the construction, alteration or reconstruction of public swimming pools or water recreation attractions or the alteration of public swimming pool equipment.

(4) No one may maintain, manage or operate a public swimming pool or water recreation attraction for which construction, alteration or reconstruction is made after January 1, 1990, unless all of the following have taken place:

(a) The department has reviewed and approved the construction, alteration or reconstruction under sub. (2).

(b) The applicable fee under sub. (3) has been paid.

(c) The construction, alteration or reconstruction of the public swimming pool or water recreation attraction conforms to the plans and specifications approved by the department under sub. (2).

(5) The department shall promulgate rules establishing all of the following:

(a) The definition of “water attraction”.

(b) The amounts of fees to perform review of plans and specifications as specified in sub. (2).

(6) Whoever violates this section or the rules promulgated under this section may be fined not less than $100 nor more than $5,000. Each day of continued violation constitutes a separate offense.

History: 1989 a. 31; 1993 a. 16 ss. 2402, 2561, 2562; Stats. 1993 s. 145.26; 2017 a. 331.

Cross-reference: See also ch. SPS 390, Wis. adm. code.