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Governor

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State Surgeon General

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### **SEPTIC TANK ABANDONMENT FOR USE AS CISTERN**

- 1) The applicant shall obtain a system abandonment permit (\$50) and pay a lab fee (\$50) to the Monroe County Health Department. The permit application shall specify the intended use of the septic tank as a cistern.
- 2) The activities related to abandoning the onsite sewage treatment and disposal system shall not create a sanitary nuisance.
- 3) The septic tank shall be disconnected from the drainfield and from the building sewer pipe.
- 4) All work to disconnect, clean and sanitize the septic tank shall be conducted by a registered septic tank contractor or a state-licensed plumber or by the owner of the single-family residence being served by the septic tank.
- 5) All septage, wash water, and other liquids removed from the tank shall be removed and handled as septage (64E-6.010) by a DOH-licensed disposal service and disposed of at a DEP-regulated wastewater treatment facility.
- 6) The health department shall inspect the tank once it is disconnected, emptied, cleaned, disinfected and filled with water. The inspection shall determine that:
  - a) the tank has been disconnected from the drainfield and the building sewage
  - b) the tank is full of water within 12 inches from the top of the tank
  - c) the clarity of the water is such that a Secchi disk is visible at the bottom of the tank
  - d) the pH of the water in the tank is between 6.0 and 8.0
  - e) the free chlorine residual of the water in the tank is <1.0ppm
  - f) the total coliform count <1000 per 100 ml
  - g) the fecal coliform count is <200 per 100 ml
  - h) no sanitary nuisance condition exists related to abandonment

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Monroe County Health Department  
Environmental Health Services  
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- 7) While one inspection is included in the abandonment permit fee, the applicant shall pay a re-inspection fee (64-E-6.0302(I), FAC) for any additional inspection visits necessary until all of the criteria in #6 are met and final approval of the abandonment is granted by the county health department.
- 8) The applicant shall be responsible for all required laboratory fees. All sampling shall be conducted by county health department staff during the final inspection.
- 9) The abandonment/cistern conversion permit shall be valid for 18 months. The septic tank shall be properly abandoned within 90 days after connection to the sanitary sewer.
- 10) The tank shall not be connected to any irrigation components nor the water used for irrigation purposes until final approval of the abandonment has been granted by the county health department.
- 11) Upon final approval of the abandonment, use of the tank or the drainfield for sewage storage, treatment or disposal is prohibited and constitutes a nuisance injurious to health as defined by Chapter 386.041, FS.
- 12) Upon final approval of the abandonment, the water collected in the tank shall be utilized for non-potable, irrigation purposes only.

**WARNING:** Working in and around an open septic tank can be dangerous. Activities related to the cleaning and disinfection of the septic tank could expose the workers to hazards related to confined workspaces, methane gas, aerosolized pathogens, collapsing tanks and other hazards.

The applicant and workers are advised to seek advice from OSHA or experts in occupational safety before undertaking this work.

Additionally, the applicant is advised to have the tank inspected by a civil engineer or other person qualified to evaluate the condition of the tank and its suitability for the intended use.