

Dear Sewage Enforcement Officer,

Since the last SEO email on November 21, 2014, the Act 537 program would like to inform you of the following program updates and issues:

1. As a reminder, the current certification cycle will end on June 30, 2016. In addition to completing the renewal application and paying the \$50 renewal fee, SEOs are required to obtain 15 credits of continuing education by the end of the cycle in order to renew their certification for the 2016-2018 certification cycle. The only exception to this continuing education rule is for SEOs certified between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2016. These SEOs only need to complete and return the SEO Renewal Application and remit the \$50 fee by June 30, 2016. They have until June 30, 2018 to obtain their first 15 credits of continuing education. The credit count for each SEO can be found on the list titled "Active SEOs by County", under [DEP's webpage for SEOs](#).

As a courtesy, the SEO Renewal Applications will be mailed to SEOs in the Spring of 2016. Any questions regarding your certification status should be directed to [RA-seotrng@pa.gov](mailto:RA-seotrng@pa.gov).

2. The Bureau under which the Act 537 program resides recently had a name change. We are no longer the Bureau of Point and Non-Point Source Management; we are the Bureau of Clean Water. It will take time to completely transition to the name change, so you will see both Bureau names on parts of our website and documents.
3. The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) website has been upgraded and transitioned to a new location. The main DEP website is located at [www.dep.pa.gov](http://www.dep.pa.gov). Consequently, the Onlot Alternate Technology Listings is now accessible by using the keyword Onlot Alternate Technology in the search list. The direct link to the web page is shown below.

[http://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/PointNonPointMgmt/WastewaterMgmt/Act537/OnlotDisposal/Pages/OnlotAlternateTechnologyListings.aspx#.Vm6\\_6PMo6po](http://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/PointNonPointMgmt/WastewaterMgmt/Act537/OnlotDisposal/Pages/OnlotAlternateTechnologyListings.aspx#.Vm6_6PMo6po)

SEOs are advised to access the web page for the most current listings.

4. It has come to the attention of DEP that some SEOs have been attaching "seals" to official correspondence relating to Act 537 matters. The use of a "Seal" on documents signed or written by an SEO implies that the seal is an official seal and that its use is authorized by the Commonwealth, which is not the case. SEO certification differs from a license issued by the Commonwealth to certain professionals such as engineers and geologists. Licensing statutes for professional engineers, geologists and certain other professions specifically authorize them to use seals and many laws and regulations require that such professionals attach their seals to various documents. An SEO in active status, on the other hand, is issued a certificate by the Department. This form of certification approval may be used in an official capacity to demonstrate their position as an SEO. In addition, there are no laws or regulations which require that a document be "sealed" by an SEO.

Accordingly, a "Seal" should not be used by an SEO in official correspondence or in permitting actions.

5. The DEP and the Department of Natural Resources (DCNR) have partnered to address requirements for sewage disposal at leased campsites on Bureaus of Forestry and State Park lands. A leased campsite is a small parcel of land that is leased by DCNR's Bureaus of Forestry or State Parks to an individual or group of individuals solely for recreational purposes.

In general, the Bureaus of Forestry and State Parks do not allow new sewage systems which utilize any type of drainfields, regardless of SEO approval. However, improvements to an existing system or a replacement for a malfunctioning system may be made under "grandfathering" status. DCNR will allow new sealed vault privies if permitted by the SEO. Piped wastewater from the cabin to the privy is not allowed for any reason and must be disconnected if it currently exists. Holding tanks will be allowed only in the case of a system malfunction and if permitted by the SEO.

DEP is developing a Fact Sheet "Act 537 – Understanding Onlot Sewage Disposal at Leased Campsites" that addresses sewage disposal regulation and policy, and commonly asked questions. It should be available by June 2016. The Bureau of Forestry is currently updating their Operations Manual for State Forest leased campsites, effective January 1, 2016, which includes a section on onlot sewage disposal.

SEOs are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the locations and distribution of leased campsites within their jurisdiction and to establish a working relationship with the respective District Forester and/or Park Manager so as to coordinate sewage-related activities.

6. Pennsylvania is experiencing a growing number of wineries, breweries and distilleries across the state. The wastewater produced during wine, beer and spirits production often contains elevated sugars, elevated solids, ethanol, acids, soaps, detergents, salts, metals, very high nitrates and a very high biochemical oxygen demand (BOD). This high strength wastewater cannot be properly treated in an onlot sewage disposal system. Winery, brewery and distillery wastewater is classified as industrial waste and cannot be disposed of in an onlot sewage disposal system. Further, 25 Pa. Code §72.2(c)(3) prohibits an SEO from issuing a permit for an individual or community onlot sewage system that proposes and is designed for the disposal of substances defined as industrial wastes under the Clean Streams Law.

An SEO may issue onlot permits for restaurant and restroom wastewater associated with these facilities according to Chapter 73. However, an SEO who receives a permit application for or questions on the disposal of wastewater from wine, beer and spirits production should direct the applicant to contact the DEP regional office for advice and direction.

Sincerely,

**John R. Diehl, P.G.** | Chief, Act 537 Program  
Department of Environmental Protection | Bureau of Clean Water  
Rachel Carson State Office Building  
400 Market St. | Harrisburg PA 17105-8774  
Phone: 717.783.2941 | Fax: 717.772.5156  
[www.dep.pa.gov](http://www.dep.pa.gov)