

**Homeowner Septic Inspection Certification Exam - Question Bank**

1	What is the primary function of the septic tank? a) Settle out solids b) Provide retention time and some anaerobic treatment of the effluent c) Allow the fats, oils, and grease to float to the top d) All the above
2	What is the primary function of the drainfield? a) To treat the solid in septic effluent b) Allow the septic effluent to enter the groundwater c) Treat effluent and associated pathogens by microorganisms in the soil d) Collect floating grease particles from effluent during release into the soil
3	What is the primary function of the distribution box? a) To prevent solids from entering the drainfield b) Allow for equal distribution of the drainfield laterals c) To regulate which laterals receive effluent d) To switch delivery of effluent between laterals
4	How often should a conventional gravity system be inspected? a) 2 years b) 1 year c) 5 years d) 3 years
5	How often should an alternative system be inspected by a septic professional? a) Every year b) Every 2 years c) Every 3 years d) Every 5 years
6	How many cumulative inches of scum and sludge trigger a septic tank pumping? a) 12 b) 30 c) 15 d) 20 or 1/3 of the tank volume
7	The Health Department recommends adding septic additives to your tank regularly. a) True, septic additives can boost the treatment capabilities of an OSS b) False
8	Grease and oils are readily treated by an OSS. a) True b) False, best practices include disposing of grease in the garbage and minimizing excessive grease disposal down the drain.
9	If there is surfacing effluent in your yard, what should you do? a) Call a septic professional b) Call the health department c) Protect the area from children and pets d) All of the above
10	Does the HOST certification allow you to inspect other people's septic systems? a) Yes

	<p>b) No, only the system in operation at the time of certification  c) Sometimes</p>
11	<p>What is the purpose of the inlet baffle?</p> <p>a) Make sure the effluent gets into the tank  b) It's optional and only required in certain circumstances  c) To prevent effluent from backing up into the house  d) To prevent the disruption of the settled solids and accumulated scum, which prevent accidental release out to the drainfield.</p>
12	<p>What is the purpose of the outlet baffle?</p> <p>a) To ensure that effluent remains in the tank  b) To control the flow of effluent out of the distribution box  c) To prevent solids and scum from moving out to the drainfield  d) They are optional and can be removed if you don't think you need it</p>
13	<p>An asbuilt is a record drawing of the septic system component and locations.</p> <p>a) True  b) False</p>
14	<p>How often should the outlet filter be checked?</p> <p>a) When there is sewage on the ground.  b) When the septic backs up into the house.  c) Every 3-5 years when the tanks are pumped.  d) Every 6 months to a year depending on use and/or at time of service.</p>
15	<p>A homeowner can dig up and repair their drainfield.</p> <p>a) True, provided they notify the health department of the need for drainfield repair.  b) False, all drainfield repairs require a permit from the Health Department and must be performed by a licensed professional.</p>
16	<p>Can a homeowner install or repair risers on their septic tank?</p> <p>a) Yes, certain prescribed activities are permitted by the homeowner  b) No repairs may be permitted by homeowners.</p>
17	<p>A homeowner must receive approval from the Health Department before repairing, altering, or expanding their OSS.</p> <p>a) True  b) False</p>
18	<p>A HOST inspection is valid for time of sale.</p> <p>a) True, provided that the buyer's agent receives a copy of the report  b) False, an Island County Maintenance Service Provider must perform the inspection</p>
19	<p>Strong acids, bases, or chlorinated organic solvents are approved for cleaning an OSS tank.</p> <p>a) True  b) False</p>
20	<p>If there are any solids in the pump tank it must be serviced by a licensed pumper.</p> <p>a) True, solids in the pump tank can be accidentally pumped to the drainfield  b) False, up to 6" of solids are permissible</p>
21	<p>Who is approved to remove septage from a septic tank?</p> <p>a) Anyone with a pumper truck  b) A homeowner with a pump  c) A licensed septic pumper  d) You never need to have your tank pumped</p>
22	<p>Unsecured septic tank lids are safe for children and pets.</p>

	<p>a) True b) False, children, adults and pets die of septic entrapment every year</p>
23	<p>All lids must be secure to prevent accidental entrapment.</p> <p>a) True, loose and/or broken lids are a significant safety hazard for accidental entrapment. b) False, concrete lids are heavy enough to prevent access</p>
25	<p>When inspecting a septic tank what should you do to prevent entrapment?</p> <p>a) Never leave an open tank unattended b) Have two people present at all times c) Keep pets and children away from the area while inspecting d) All of the above</p>
26	<p>Having a helper present when septic tank lids are off can reduce the risk of a fatal entrapment accident.</p> <p>a) True b) False</p>
27	<p>Septic gases are life threatening and you should never attempt to enter a tank or place your head in an open tank.</p> <p>a) True, these gases are toxic when inhaled in high concentrations or for a prolonged period of time b) False, they are unpleasant, but not harmful</p>
28	<p>Chemical solutions used in RV toilet tanks are safe to add to your septic system.</p> <p>a) True b) False</p>
29	<p>A complete septic system evaluation for a traditional conventional system includes:</p> <p>a) A septic tank b) A distribution box c) A drainfield d) All the above</p>
30	<p>A failed OSS can pollute which of the following?</p> <p>a) A drinking well b) Groundwater c) Surface water and beaches d) All the above</p>
31	<p>Flies, rodents, and household pets can encounter sewage from a failing system and subsequently pass the diseases found in human sewage from a failing system to humans.</p> <p>a) True b) False</p>
32	<p>If you are unable to locate your system components, whom should you call?</p> <p>a) Your neighbor b) A plumber c) A license Maintenance Service Provider d) The city</p>
33	<p>A conventional gravity system always requires a pump.</p> <p>a) True b) False</p>
34	<p>Flow of sewage:</p> <p>a) Toilet, inlet baffle, septic tank, outlet baffle, distribution, to drainfield b) Septic tank, distribution, outlet baffle, and drainfield</p>

	<p>c) Toilet, outlet baffle, inlet baffle septic tank, drainfield d) None of the above</p>
35	<p>A pressure distribution system utilizes a pump to move the effluent to the drainfield.</p> <p>a) True b) False</p>
36	<p>A pump chamber does not need to be pumped until there are 6 inches of solids.</p> <p>a) True b) False, any solids in the pump tank should be removed by a septic professional</p>
37	<p>A leaking plumbing fixture in the house can cause premature failure of your septic system.</p> <p>a) True b) False</p>
38	<p>It is best to do all your laundry on the weekend.</p> <p>a) True b) False, this can cause a hydraulic overload and flush solids out to the drainfield</p>
39	<p>When washing paintbrushes there is enough liquid in the tank to dilute the paint and not damage your system.</p> <p>a) True b) False, only biodegradable materials should go down the drain. Paint solids can damage the soil interface in the drainfield where treatment occurs</p>
40	<p>Proper hygienic practices <i>minimize</i> the risk of exposure to disease causing agents that are found in sewage.</p> <p>a) True b) False</p>
41	<p>What items should not be flushed down the toilet?</p> <p>a) Cigarette butts b) Baby wipes c) Feminine care products d) All the above</p>
42	<p>The use of a garbage disposal grinder will increase the frequency of required septic pumping.</p> <p>a) True b) False</p>
43	<p>The drainfield is a great place to plant:</p> <p>a) Trees b) A Garden c) Willow trees d) Grass</p>
44	<p>Driving on the drainfield compacts the soils and can potentially cause premature failure.</p> <p>a) True, soils are easily compacted when wet, which is irreversible b) False</p>
45	<p>If you are unable to remove your lid, O&amp;M specialist can help you.</p> <p>a) True b) False</p>
46	<p>HOST evaluations must be submitted to the Health Department for review.</p> <p>a) True, the form can be found on the Island County Public Health web site b) False, the county does not require a specific form or a timely submission</p>
47	<p>Back siphoning can occur if a garden hose is submerged in septic effluent.</p>

	<p>a) True, if the water supply experience a pressure drop, septic effluent can be drawn back into the water line, contaminating the water supply and distribution lines</p> <p>b) False</p>
48	<p>All tools should be cleaned and disinfected after coming into contact with septic effluent using:</p> <p>a) Pure bleach</p> <p>b) Soap and water</p> <p>c) They don't need to be cleaned</p> <p>d) 1:5 bleach to water solution</p>
49	<p>What is an MSP?</p> <p>a) Mediocre service provider</p> <p>b) Master septic professional</p> <p>c) Maintenance Service Provider (licensed by Island County)</p> <p>d) Must Solve Problem Professional</p>
50	<p>What is the benefit of having a professional evaluate your system periodically?</p> <p>a) MSPs can identify precursors to failures</p> <p>b) MSPs can perform limited repairs</p> <p>c) MSPs can diagnose OSS irregularities</p> <p>d) All the above</p>
51	<p>What is an asbuilt?</p> <p>a) A diagram of home plumbing fixtures</p> <p>b) The blueprints of a house, to include plumbing stub-outs</p> <p>c) A record drawing of the OSS components and location</p> <p>d) A drawing of future building alterations</p>
52	<p>What should not go down the drain?</p> <p>a) Paper towels and baby wipes because they do not readily break down and are difficult to remove</p> <p>b) Dish water</p> <p>c) Soda or milk</p> <p>d) Dirty water from a washing machine</p>
53	<p>Scum is the fats, oils and greases that float on the top of the liquid in a septic tank.</p> <p>a) True</p> <p>b) False</p>
54	<p>Sludge is the accumulated solids in the bottom of the septic tank that require periodic removal.</p> <p>a) True</p> <p>b) False</p>
55	<p>HOST OSS evaluations can be submitted on a homemade form.</p> <p>a) True</p> <p>b) False, the approved form can be found online</p>
56	<p>Regular system evaluations can prevent costly failure in the future.</p> <p>a) True, issues tend to compound in complexity and cost if not caught and corrected in a timely fashion</p> <p>b) False</p>
57	<p>Cesspools and seepage pits are 'grandfathered in' and considered an approved OSS system.</p> <p>a) True</p> <p>b) False, cesspool/seepage pits can readily contaminate ground water and drinking wells and are not considered to be adequate sewage treatment (aka a septic failure).</p>
58	<p>Effluent levels below the outlet baffle indicate a leaking septic tank</p>

	<p>a) True, most likely. A septic professional can help diagnose the issue  b) False</p>
59	<p>After the septic tanks are pumped there should be no water returning from the drainfield back into the tank.</p> <p>a) True, this is an indication that the drainfield is potentially failed. A septic professional is required to evaluate the system.  b) False</p>
60	<p>If the effluent level in your tank is below the outlet baffle, the tank may have a leak and a septic professional is required to evaluate your system.</p> <p>a) True  b) False</p>
61	<p>If the effluent level in the septic tank is above the inlet baffle (flooded), there may be an associated drainfield failure or a plugged baffle and a septic professional is required to evaluate your system.</p> <p>a) True  b) False</p>
62	<p>Retention time for a septic tank is 24-48 hours.</p> <p>a) True  b) False, it should be 3 weeks</p>
63	<p>Monitoring ports allow for a visual inspection of the drainfield interface.</p> <p>a) True, but not all systems have them  b) False</p>
64	<p>Rubber gloves and eye protection help to prevent infection from potential pathogens found in septic effluent such as:</p> <p>a) Bacteria: E.coli, salmonella, shigella  b) Viruses: Hepatitis B  c) Pathogenic protozoa: Giardia, Cryptosporidium  d) All the above</p>
65	<p>Risers should be watertight.</p> <p>a) True, because groundwater and surface water can infiltrate the septic tank and place undue burden on the drainfield  b) False</p>
66	<p>Septic effluent should smell musty like moist soil. Strong sour odors may be an indication of other problems.</p> <p>a) True  b) False, it should not smell like anything</p>
67	<p>Trickling water in the septic tank from the house can indicate a leaking fixture.</p> <p>a) True  b) False</p>
68	<p>The cumulative depth of the scum layer and the sludge layer is considered in determining if a tank needs to be pumped.</p> <p>a) True  b) False</p>
69	<p>A septic tank needs to be pumped every year</p> <p>a) True  b) False, only when the cumulative depth of scum and sludge = 20 inches for a 1,000 gallon tank or 1/3 of the tank volume.</p>

70	Pumping a septic tank during the winter with a high water table may result in the tank floating up out of the soil if not refilled directly. a) True b) False
71	Junction boxes where the pump connects to the power should be water tight a) True, moisture can cause the wires to corrode and short b) False
72	With a pump tank, a drawdown indicates the functionality of the pump and/or drainfield laterals. a) True, this value can be compared annually and used as an indication of potential issues b) False
73	If the distribution box is not set with equal distribution to all laterals, a septic professional should be contacted directly to correct the deficiency. a) True, equal distribution will allow for the utilization of the complete drainfield, mitigating premature failure of the drainfield. b) False
74	With a pressure distribution system regular maintenance includes having the drainfield laterals flushed by a septic professional. This reduces the chance of premature drainfield failure because: a) Solids may accumulate in the laterals plugging some of the orifices b) Plugged orifices will reduce the amount of drainfield that is being used c) If the laterals are partially plugged, the effluent will not be distributed equally over the entire drainfield surface d) All the above
75	1:5 bleach to water is an adequate sanitizing solution for your inspection tools. a) True, you can safely dispose of this solution in the first compartment of your septic tank. b) False, pure bleach is better.
76	Minimizing the amount of chemicals and detergents that go down the drain is one of several best practices for maintaining a healthy septic tank. a) True, there is an active biological community in the tank and soils that are responsible for the ultimate treatment of the pathogens in septic effluent. b) False
77	Disposing of old chemicals (pesticides, paint, cleaning products or pharmaceuticals) in your septic system can reduce its lifespan. a) True b) False
78	Protecting the reserve area and drainfield from any encroachments such as parked cars, heavy equipment, driveways, livestock, concrete, asphalt, etc. will preserve the functional integrity of the drainfield. a) True, compacted soils are less capable of effectively treating septic effluent. Air flow through the soil is integral to the treatment process. b) False, dirt is dirt and the drainfield is a minor component of the OSS
79	In order to preserve the drainfield, the homeowner should divert the flow of roof downspouts and surface water away from the septic system. a) True, Saturated soils (full of water) are unable to treat septic effluent b) False
80	Septic systems protect our health by safely treating and disposing of human waste. a) True b) False, there are no health hazards associated with sewage

81	When designing a septic system for a standard single family residence, the designer will base the systems size on: a) Number of bathrooms b) Square footage of the house c) Number of bedrooms d) Number of people living in the house
82	It is an acceptable practice to park any vehicles on a drainfield a) Never b) Sometimes, depends on the type of car
83	Regularly inspecting my system can detect small problems before they become more serious and costly to repair. a) True b) False, it's an arbitrary county and state requirement
84	Can an alternative system be inspected by a homeowner? a) No, an MSP is required due to the complexity of the system. b) Yes, if the homeowner attends septic 103 Training c) No, systems with a pump tank may never be inspected by homeowners d) Yes, alternative systems are covered in HOST 201 training
85	The type of systems that qualify for Homeowner inspection include: a) Traditional gravity systems b) Conventional pressure distribution c) Systems not on in designated sensitive areas. d) All the above
86	Properly operated and maintained alternative systems provide equivalent or enhanced treatment performance as compared to conventional gravity system. a) True, and they must be inspected by a licensed Maintenance Service Provider annually. b) False
87	If an onsite septic system is located on the marine shoreline it is not eligible for the certified homeowner inspection program. a) True b) False
88	If an onsite septic system is located in the Maxwelton Watershed, the Holmes Harbor Watershed, or the Penn Cove Watershed it is not eligible for the certified homeowner septic system evaluation program. a) True, due to the sensitivities of these watersheds, a professional evaluation is required. b) False
89	A conventional pressure distribution system means an on-site sewage system consisting of a septic tank, an effluent pump, pump tank and valve manifold, and a system of small diameter pipes equally distributing effluent through a drainfield (SSAS-subsurface absorption system) a) True b) False
90	A conventional system means an on-site sewage system consisting of a septic tank and a subsurface soil absorption system (drainfield) with gravity distribution of effluent (gravity loop or distribution box). a) True b) False

91	<p>The reserve area for a replacement drainfield should be designated on the asbuilt if the system was constructed after 1993. This area should be protected from development, encroachment, vehicular traffic, livestock, land clearing, etc.</p> <p>a) True, in the event that the drainfield fails, the reserve area can be utilized to construct a replacement drainfield.</p> <p>b) False</p>
92	<p>What chapter of Island County code covers onsite septic systems?</p> <p>a) ICC 4.02.A</p> <p>b) ICC 12.07C</p> <p>c) ICC 1.02.03F</p> <p>d) ICC 8.07D</p>
93	<p>A resident/owner may work on their own OSS without a repair permit when performing replacement, addition, or modification of broken or malfunctioning building sewers, risers and lids, sewage tank lids, sewage tank baffles, sewage tank pumps (same make and model or equivalent replacement pump), pump control floats, pipes connecting multiple sewage tanks, and OSS inspection boxes and ports where a sewage tank, treatment component, or soil dispersal component does not need to be replaced.</p> <p>a) True</p> <p>b) False</p>
94	<p>The OSS owner is responsible for operating, monitoring, and maintaining the OSS to minimize the risk of failure.</p> <p>a) True</p> <p>b) False</p>
95	<p>The pump and/or siphon chamber(s) shall be pumped when any solids are present</p> <p>a) True</p> <p>b) False</p>
96	<p>If a drainfield is located off-site, the off-site property owner(s) served by the OSS shall be responsible for the care and maintenance of the on-site sewage disposal system and its components.</p> <p>a) True</p> <p>b) False</p>
97	<p>It is the resident/owner's responsibility to ensure that the appropriate permits are obtained from WA State Labor and Industries for all electrical work.</p> <p>a) True</p> <p>b) False</p>
98	<p>Wet season surfacing of effluent is not considered a sewage failure</p> <p>a) True</p> <p>b) False</p>
99	<p>Sewage backing into the structure as a result of a sewer line blockage is considered a sewage failure, even if the OSS serving the property is fully functional</p> <p>a) True</p> <p>b) False</p>
100	<p>If the contents or discharge of a sewage disposal system gives rise to a nuisance due to odor or unsightly appearance, the sewage disposal system is considered by health code to be failed.</p> <p>a) True</p> <p>b) False</p>

