

567—69.2 (455B) Time of transfer inspections.

69.2(1) Inspections required. Prior to any transfer of ownership of a building where a person resides, congregates, or is employed that is served by a private sewage disposal system, the sewage disposal system serving the building shall be inspected. In the event that weather or other temporary physical conditions prevent the certified inspection from being conducted, the buyer shall execute and submit a binding agreement with the county board of health to conduct a certified inspection of the private sewage disposal system at the earliest practicable time and to be responsible for any required modifications to the private sewage disposal system as identified by the certified inspection. In the event that all parties agree the existing private sewage disposal system will not pass inspection, the buyer may forego the inspection and execute a binding agreement with the local board of health to install a private sewage disposal system compliant with this rule at a time specified by the administrative authority. The inspection requirement applies to all types of ownership transfers not specifically exempted, including when a seller-financed real estate contract is signed.

a. Inspection exemptions. The following types of real estate transactions are exempt from the inspection requirement. However, the discharge restrictions in paragraph 69.1(3) “b” shall always apply.

(1) A transfer made pursuant to a court order, including but not limited to a transfer under Iowa Code chapter 633 or 633A, the execution of a judgment, the foreclosure of a real estate mortgage pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 654, the forfeiture of a real estate contract under Iowa Code chapter 656, a transfer by a trustee in bankruptcy, a transfer by eminent domain, or a transfer resulting from a decree for specific performance.

(2) A transfer to a mortgagee by a mortgagor or successor in interest who is in default, a transfer by a mortgagee who has acquired real property as a result of a deed in lieu of foreclosure or has acquired real property under Iowa Code chapter 654 or 655A, or a transfer back to a mortgagor exercising a right of first refusal pursuant to Iowa Code section 654.16A.

(3) A transfer by a fiduciary in the course of the administration of a decedent’s estate, guardianship, conservatorship, or trust.

(4) A transfer between joint tenants or tenants in common.

(5) A transfer made to a spouse or to a person in the lineal line of consanguinity of a person making the transfer.

(6) A transfer between spouses resulting from a decree of dissolution of marriage, a decree of legal separation, or a property settlement agreement which is incidental to the decree, including a decree ordered pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 598.

(7) A transfer in which the transferee intends to demolish or raze the building.

(8) A transfer of property with a system that was installed not more than two years prior to the date of the transfer.

(9) A deed arising from a partition proceeding.

(10) A tax sale deed issued by the county treasurer.

(11) A transfer for which consideration is \$500 or less.

(12) A deed between a family corporation, partnership, limited partnership, limited liability partnership, or limited liability company as defined in Iowa Code section 428A.2, subsection 15, and its stockholders, partners, or members for the purpose of transferring real property in an incorporation or a corporate dissolution or in the organization or dissolution of a partnership, limited partnership, limited liability partnership, or limited liability company under the laws of this state, where the deed is given for no actual consideration other than for shares or for debt securities of the family corporation, partnership, limited partnership, limited liability partnership, or limited liability company.

b. Inspection criteria. If a private sewage disposal system is failing to ensure effective wastewater treatment or is otherwise improperly functioning, the private sewage disposal system shall be renovated to meet current construction standards, as adopted by the department, either by the seller or, by agreement within a reasonable time period as determined by the administrative authority, by the buyer. If the private sewage disposal system is properly treating the wastewater and not creating an unsanitary condition in the

environment at the time of inspection, the system is not required to meet current construction standards. However, the discharge restrictions in paragraph 69.1(3)“b” shall always apply.

c. Inspection validity. An inspection is valid for a period of two years for any ownership transfers during that period.

69.2(2) Certified time of transfer inspectors. Inspections shall be conducted by an inspector certified by the department. In order to be a certified time of transfer inspector, an individual shall have met the experience requirements, have successfully completed the inspection course and examination, and have been issued a current certificate by the department in accordance with this rule.

a. Experience requirements. In order to be certified by taking the inspection course and examination only, an individual must have at least two years' experience in the operation, installation, inspection, design or maintenance of private sewage disposal systems. Individuals lacking this experience must complete additional coursework before attending the inspection course with testing. The additional courses shall include, but not be limited to, “Onsite Basics 101” and “Alternative Systems” offered by the Onsite Wastewater Training Center of Iowa or courses determined by the department to be equivalent.

b. Examination application. A person wishing to take the examination necessary to become a certified inspector shall complete the Certified Time of Transfer Inspector Application, Form 542-0192. A listing of dates and locations of examinations is available from the department upon request. The application form requires the applicant to indicate pertinent educational background, training and past experience in providing private sewage disposal services. The completed application and the application fee shall be sent to Time of Transfer Inspector Certification, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 502 E. 9th Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0034. An application for examination must be received by the department at least 30 days prior to the date of the examination.

c. Application evaluation. The director may designate department personnel or an experience review committee to evaluate all applications for examination. A notification of the application review decision will be sent to the applicant prior to the examination date. The applicant shall have the right to dispute the application evaluation.

d. Certification. Applicants who successfully meet the department’s requirements will receive a written certification from the department. The department shall maintain a current listing of certified time of transfer inspectors. The list shall be available on the department’s Web site and shall be provided to county boards of health and other interested parties.

e. Fees. The following nonrefundable fees apply:

- (1) Examination fee. The fee for each examination shall be \$50.
- (2) Certification fee. The fee for inspector certification shall be \$75 for each one-half year of a two-year period from the date of issuance of the certification to June 30 of the next even-numbered year.
- (3) Certification renewal fee. The fee for certification renewal shall be \$300 for the two-year period.
- (4) Penalty fee. Rescinded IAB 7/11/12, effective 8/15/12.

f. Renewal period. All certificates shall expire on June 30 of even-numbered years and must be renewed every two years in order to maintain certification.

g. Renewal rights. Inspectors seeking renewal more than 45 days following expiration of the certificate shall lose the right to renew under the normal renewal process and must retake the inspector class and test to become recertified.

69.2(3) Continuing education.

a. CEU requirements. Continuing education units (CEUs) must be earned during each two-year period from April 1 of the even-numbered year until March 30 of the next even-numbered year. A certified inspector must earn 1.2 CEUs or 12 contact hours during each two-year period. Newly certified time of transfer inspectors (previously uncertified) who become certified after April 1 of a two-year period will not be required to earn CEUs until the next two-year period.

b. CEU approval. All activities for which CEU credit will be granted must be approved by an accredited college or university, an issuing agency, or the department and shall be related to private sewage disposal systems.

c. CEU reporting. It is the personal responsibility of the certified inspector to maintain a written record of and to notify the department of the CEUs earned during the period. The CEUs earned during the period shall be shown on the application for renewal.

69.2(4) Certificate renewal.

a. Certification period. All certificates shall expire on June 30 of even-numbered years and must be renewed every two years in order to stay effective.

b. Application for renewal. Renewal applications shall be submitted 60 days before the expiration date of the current certificate. Late applications or incomplete applications may lead to revocation of the certificate. Renewal of certificates will only be granted to inspectors in good standing.

c. CEUs. Only those certified inspectors fulfilling the continuing education requirements before the end of each two-year period (March 31) will be allowed to renew their certificates. The certificates of inspectors not fulfilling the continuing education requirements shall expire on June 30 of the even-numbered year.

d. Renewal fee. A renewal fee in the amount of \$300 must accompany the renewal application in order for the certificate to be renewed. Failure to submit the renewal fee on time may lead to revocation of the certificate.

69.2(5) Obligations of certified inspectors.

a. Certified inspectors shall conduct time of transfer inspections according to this rule.

b. Following an inspection, the inspection form and any attachments shall be provided to the county environmental health department for enforcement of any follow-up mandatory improvements to the system, to the department for record, and to the person ordering the inspection.

69.2(6) Disciplinary action.

a. Reasons for disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may be taken against a certified time of transfer inspector on any of the grounds specified in Iowa Code section 455B.219 and the following more specific grounds.

(1) Failure to use reasonable care or judgment or to apply knowledge or ability in performing the duties of a certified inspector.

(2) Failure to submit required records of inspection or other reports required under applicable permits or rules of the department, including failure to submit complete records or reports.

(3) Knowingly making any false statement, representation, or certification on any application, record, report or document required to be maintained or submitted under any applicable permit or rule of the department.

(4) Fraud in procuring a certificate.

(5) Professional incompetence.

(6) Knowingly making misleading, deceptive, untrue or fraudulent representations in the practice of the certified inspector's profession or engaging in unethical conduct or practice harmful or detrimental to the public. Proof of actual injury need not be established.

(7) Habitual intoxication or addiction to the use of drugs.

(8) Conviction of a felony related to the profession or occupation of the certified inspector. A copy of the record of conviction or plea of guilty shall be conclusive evidence.

(9) Fraud in representations as to skill or ability.

(10) Use of untruthful or improbable statements in advertisements.

(11) Willful or repeated violations of the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 455B, division III.

b. Disciplinary sanctions. Disciplinary sanctions may include the following:

(1) Revocation of a certificate. Revocation may be permanent without chance of recertification or for a specified period of time.

(2) Partial revocation or suspension. Revocation or suspension of the practice of a particular aspect of the inspection of private sewage disposal systems may be imposed.

(3) Probation. Probation under specified conditions relevant to the specific grounds for disciplinary action may be imposed.

(4) Additional education, training, and examination requirements. Additional education, training, and reexamination may be required as a condition of reinstatement.

(5) Penalties. Civil penalties not to exceed \$1,000 may be assessed for causes identified in paragraph 69.2(6)“a” through the issuance of an administrative order.

c. Procedure.

(1) Initiation of disciplinary action. The department staff shall initiate a disciplinary action by conducting such lawful investigation as is necessary to establish a legal and factual basis for action. Written notice shall be given to a certified inspector against whom disciplinary action is being considered. The notice shall provide the certified inspector with 20 days to present any relevant facts and to indicate the certified inspector’s position in the matter.

(2) A certified inspector’s failure to communicate facts and positions relevant to the disciplinary investigation by the required date may be considered by the department when determining appropriate disciplinary action.

(3) If an agreement as to appropriate disciplinary action, if any, can be reached between the department and the certified inspector, a written stipulation and settlement shall be entered into. The stipulation and settlement shall recite the basic facts and violations alleged, any facts established by the certified inspector, and the reasons for the particular sanction imposed.

(4) If an agreement as to appropriate disciplinary action cannot be reached, the department may initiate formal disciplinary procedures through the issuance of a letter imposing such disciplinary sanction as the department has deemed appropriate. Service shall be provided by certified mail.

(5) A certified inspector may appeal any disciplinary sanction imposed by the department by filing a notice of appeal with the director within 30 days of receipt of the letter imposing disciplinary sanction. If an appeal is filed by the certified inspector, contested case proceedings shall be initiated by the department in accordance with 567—Chapter 7 and Iowa Code chapter 17A.

(6) Reinstatement of revoked certificates. Upon revocation of a certificate, application for certification may be allowed after two years from the date of revocation unless otherwise specified in accordance with paragraph 69.2(6)“b.” Any such applicant must meet all eligibility requirements pursuant to subrule 69.2(2) and successfully complete an examination and be certified in the same manner as a new applicant.

69.2(7) Procedures for noncompliance with child support order. Upon receipt of a certification of noncompliance with a child support obligation as provided in Iowa Code section 252J.7, the department will initiate procedures to deny an application for certification or renewal or to suspend a certification in accordance with Iowa Code section 252J.8(4). The department shall issue to the person by restricted, certified mail a notice of its intent to deny or suspend inspector certification based on receipt of a certificate of noncompliance. The suspension or denial shall be effective 30 days after receipt of the notice unless the person provides the department with a withdrawal of the certificate of noncompliance from the child support recovery unit as provided in Iowa Code section 252J.8(4)“c.” Pursuant to Iowa Code section 252J.8(4), the person does not have a right to a hearing before the department to contest the denial or suspension action under this subrule but may seek a hearing in district court in accordance with Iowa Code section 252J.9.

69.2(8) Inspection procedures. Inspections shall be conducted as follows:

a. Inspection form. The inspection shall be conducted using DNR Form 542-0191, Time of Transfer Inspection Report.

b. Record search. Prior to an inspection, the certified inspector shall contact the administrative authority to obtain any permits, as-built drawings or other information that may be available concerning the system being inspected. Information may also be obtained from service providers or the homeowner. If an as-built drawing is available, the system inspection shall verify that drawing. If no as-built drawing is available, the inspector shall develop an as-built drawing as part of the inspection.

c. Septic tank. At the time of inspection, any septic tank(s) existing as part of the sewage disposal system shall be opened and have the contents pumped out and disposed of according to 567—Chapter 68. In the alternative, the owner may provide evidence of the septic tank's being properly pumped out within three years prior to the inspection by a commercial septic tank cleaner licensed by the department which shall include documentation of the size and condition of the tank and its components at the time of such occurrence. If the septic tank(s) is opened, the condition of the tank and its components shall be documented and included in the final report.

d. Pumps and pump chambers. Pump chambers or vaults shall be opened for inspection, and the pump shall be tested to ensure proper operation.

e. Secondary treatment. Proof that a secondary treatment system is in place must be provided. This proof may include, but is not limited to:

(1) Opening a distribution box or uncovering a header pipe for a soil absorption system. Existing distribution boxes shall be opened for inspection.

(2) Verification of the existence of a sand filter by locating the vents and discharge pipe.

(3) Locating and opening the lid(s) of an advanced treatment unit.

(4) Absorption fields shall be probed to determine their condition. The condition of the fields shall be noted on the inspection report. The condition of the absorption field may also be determined with a hydraulic loading test.

f. Discharging systems. An effluent test shall be performed on any legally discharging private sewage disposal system. The effluent quality shall meet the requirements of NPDES General Permit No. 4 for CBOD₅ and TSS. The test results shall be included in the inspection report.

(1) The certified inspector shall report the location of the discharge point of a legally discharging private sewage disposal system and the discharge point's proximity to a perennial stream or drainage tile.

(2) Rescinded IAB 7/11/12, effective 8/15/12.

g. Packaged treatment units. An advanced treatment unit, such as an aerobic treatment unit, textile filter, peat filter or fixed activated sludge treatment system, shall be inspected according to the manufacturer's recommendations.

h. Other systems and system components. Private sewage disposal systems not mentioned above shall be inspected for code compliance, and an effluent sample shall be taken if applicable. Any components of the private sewage disposal system not mentioned above shall be inspected for proper function. Examples of other components include, but are not limited to, effluent screens, tertiary treatment systems, disinfection devices, alarms, control boxes and timers.

i. Inspection reports. Following an inspection, the inspection form and a narrative report describing the condition of the private sewage disposal system at the time of the inspection shall be provided to the county environmental health department, to the department for record, and to the person who ordered the inspection.

The certified inspector shall provide the completed inspection report to the county environmental health office within ten business days of the inspection date.