

# KNOW THE FACTS!

## Sewage Treatment Systems (STS) & COVID-19

- i SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, has been detected in the feces of some patients diagnosed with COVID-19. The amount of virus released (shed) from the body in stool and how long the virus is shed is not known.
- i Infectious SARS-CoV-2 has been isolated not only from respiratory droplets but also, blood, urine, and stool specimens which are all part of the wastewater stream from homes and businesses.
- i The SARS coronavirus outbreak from 2003, which is similar to the current SARS-CoV-2 virus, **had been detected in untreated sewage for up to 14 days according to the CDC. In the 2003 SARS outbreak, there was documented transmission associated with sewage aerosols.**
- i Sewage Treatment Systems (STS), also known as septic systems, are a vital part of infrastructure used to treat and safely disperse wastewater generated from within a home or business back into the environment.
- i Inspection, upkeep, service, repair and maintenance of wastewater treatment infrastructure are essential services that help ensure the public are protected from contamination and pathogens, such as SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. **Workers for such infrastructure and services are specifically exempted in the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Director's "Stay-at-Home" order.**
- i **History has shown that without STS inspections, failure rates in Hamilton County have risen as high as 62%, releasing millions of gallons of untreated sewage daily onto the surface of the ground, into storm sewers and/or local waterways.**
- i Health District STS inspections are essential services that are exempt from The Ohio Department of Health "stay-at-home" orders:
  - o Confirmed by Hamilton Co. Prosecutors Office and the Ohio Department of Health
- i Sewage Treatment Systems must function properly to prevent pollution and pathogen contamination, including from the SARS-CoV-2, from entering our waterways and contributing to human sickness, mortality, and reduced ecological health.
- i Improperly treated or untreated sewage results in health and environmental impacts to you, your family members and your neighbors.

### Hamilton County Public Health inspection staff can be identified by:

- i HCPH logoed shirts and jackets.
- i HCPH identification photo ID badge
- i Vehicles marked with HCPH door logos and/or window placards
- i HCPH business cards

### Sewage Treatment System Inspections - How we are reducing risks during the STS inspection:

- i Our team of trained professional health inspectors will continue to perform vital inspections of STS during the Coronavirus pandemic following standardized guidelines, including:
- i Team members are practicing and are required to be socially distanced (at least six feet apart).
- i Team members are telecommuting/teleworking while performing STS inspection outside and away from others.
- i Our team members **will not enter your home**, or the recommended six foot social distancing to other people.
- i Our team members practice appropriate hand washing and/or sanitation between each inspection and before approaching your door.
- i Our team members are required to take daily temperature checks, and do not report to work when ill.
- i For everyone's protection, we are requesting system owners allow our inspectors to perform inspection, without accompanying them.
- i For everyone's protection, we are requesting system owners please wait to speak with their inspector over the phone and once the inspection report is received and reviewed if there are questions.
- i **Although our team will knock on your door/ring your doorbell, feel free not to answer your door. Our inspectors will leave a door hanger and go about performing the inspection as if you were not home, as we have for over three decades.**

For more information, contact our Water Quality Division at 513-946-7966.



PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

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