
# Test Pit Preparation for Onsite Sewage Evaluations

## When do you need a “Test Pit?”

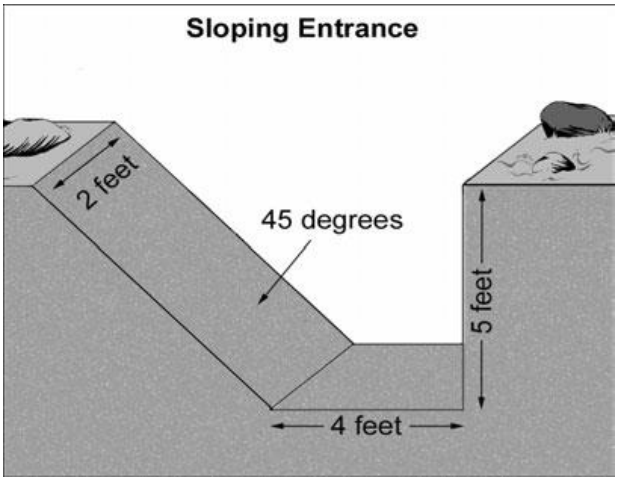
When you apply for a permit to construct an onsite sewage disposal system, a DEQ or County inspector will have to visit the proposed construction site. A test pit allows the inspector to test and examine the soil and soil layers and will help determine if it is appropriate to proceed with construction. This process is often referred to as a "site evaluation."

### Preparing the Test Pit

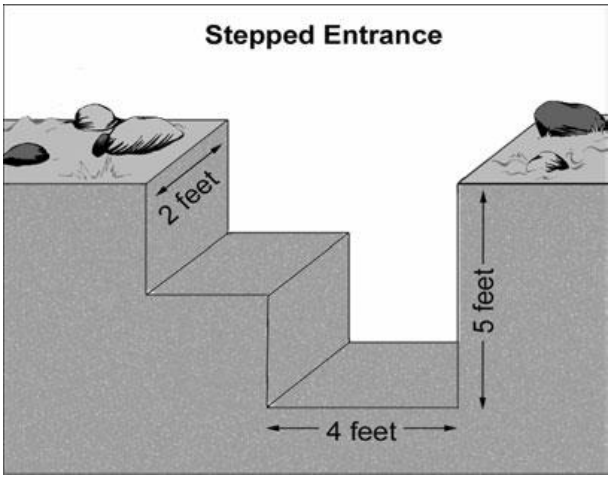
To provide for pit stabilization and safe access, standard test pits for site evaluations must be prepared in the following manner:

- The bottom of the pit shall be at least 2 feet wide and 4 feet long.
- The depth shall be at least 4.5 feet and not exceed 5 feet.
- In some instances, pits need only be excavated to the layer of hard rock or to the water table if that layer is less than 5 feet.
- Test pits shall be approximately 75 feet apart.

**Providing Access to the Standard Test Pits:**
For easy and safe access, all spoils need to be a minimum of 2 feet from the pit edge and one end of the test pit shall be either:




*Sloped at approximately 45 degrees or less if the soils are dry or loose*




*Stepped when soils are wet*

**Translation or other formats**

Español | 한국어 | 繁體中文 | Русский | Tiếng Việt | العربية

800-452-4011 | TTY: 711 | deqinfo@deq.oregon.gov

State of Oregon
DEQ Department of Environmental Quality

**Areas to avoid if possible:**

- Stay at least 100 feet away from lakes, year-round rivers, streams, springs, proposed or existing wells (including neighbors' wells).
- Stay at least within 50 feet of intermittent (flows for at least two months of the year, but not continuously throughout the year) stream or any pond, and irrigation ditches.
- Swale areas or landform depressions where surface water is likely to collect. Vegetation such as willows, wiregrass, spike rush, and mint may be indicators of wet soil conditions.
- Slopes greater than 45 percent (4.5 feet of drop in 10 linear feet).
- Areas that have been filled or where soil has been disturbed, modified, or removed.
- Any unstable landforms or areas influenced by unstable landforms (ex: landslide).
- Areas where groundwater is encountered at or near the surface.
- Areas with shallow soil depth (underlain by bedrock, hardpan, claypans, etc.) which may restrict movement of water and air, and growth of plant roots.
- Areas to be developed or disturbed for roads, buildings, etc. Stay at least 50 feet upslope from cuts greater than 30 inches in height escarpments that intersect a limiting soil layer.

## Non-discrimination statement

DEQ does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age or sex in administration of its programs or activities.

Visit DEQ's Civil Rights and Environmental Justice page.