



STATE OF DELAWARE
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES &
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL
DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES
89 KINGS HIGHWAY
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

TO: ALL WATER TREATMENT SYSTEM INSTALLERS, SUPPLIERS AND SERVICERS
DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES (DHSS)
DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PLUMBING PERMIT AND INSPECTION
PROGRAM
CLASS H SYSTEM INSPECTORS, CLASS E SYSTEM INSTALLERS, CLASS F LIQUID
WASTE HAULERS

FROM: DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL (DNREC)
DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES (DWR)
GROUND WATER DISCHARGES SECTION (GWDS)
SUSSEX COUNTY 302-856-4561 KENT & NEW CASTLE COUNTIES 302-739-9947

DATE: JUNE 17, 2009

RE: WATER SOFTENER BRINE DISCHARGE FOR INDIVIDUAL
RESIDENTIAL HOMES

During the past several years the GWDS has repeatedly fielded calls from our licensed community and concerned homeowners when water softener brine discharges are found discharging into an on-site wastewater treatment and disposal system (OSWTDS).

Section 3.12000 of The Regulations Governing the Design, Installation and Operation of On-Site Wastewater Treatment and Disposal Systems (the Regulations) states: "No cooling water, air conditioning water, groundwater, oil, water softener brine or roof drainage shall be discharged into any system without specific authorization of the Department. Water softener brine shall be discharged in a manner that does not allow surface discharge (curtain drain)."

For clarity purposes the following policy will be observed when violations of Section 3.12000 of the Regulations are brought to the Department's attention. If requested, the GWDS will provide homeowners and their agents with copies of this policy and the approved permit if available. The GWDS considers the cost to correct the problem and any potential liability a civil matter between the homeowner and the person or company responsible for installing the water softener brine discharge line. Future violations of Section 3.12000 may be referred to the Department's Environmental Enforcement Section.

Any water softener brine discharge line found discharging into an OSWTDS permitted on or after March 11, 2002 without specific authorization of the Department is in violation of Section 3.12000 of the Regulations.

Any water softener brine discharge line found discharging into an OSWTDS permitted prior to March 11, 2002 without specific authorization of the Department shall be subject to specific conditions of the OSWTDS permit.

A subsurface trench is an approved method of disposal of water softener brine for a residential OSWTDS. The GWDS suggests digging a trench approximately 12 inches wide and no deeper than 24 inches deep. The length of the trench will vary from site to site. If the soil appears to be tight or wet, the trench will need to have more square footage. Soil that appears to be loose, sandy and dry could need less. Approved trench materials include stone and graveless chambers. It is also suggested that the trench be installed a safe distance away from the foundation due to possible staining and dampness that could occur around the foundation. The GWDS will need to rely on the installer's expertise to set that safe distance from the foundation. Surface discharge of water softener brine is prohibited by Section 3.12000 of the Regulations.

Water treatment systems are considered plumbing fixtures and must be installed under permit in accordance with Section 106.1 of the Delaware Plumbing Code. Contact your local town or municipality to determine your local permit requirements.

Delaware's good nature depends on you!