



DISTRIBUTED WASTEWATER TREATMENT SYSTEM (DWTS) OVERVIEW

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Focus on Change | 2026



AGENDA

- What is a distributed wastewater treatment system (DWTS)?
- Senate Bill (SB) 796.
- Rulemaking.
- Existing DWTSs permits.





WHAT IS A DWTS?

DWTS Overview



WHAT IS A DWTS?

- **DWTS** – A “distributed wastewater treatment system” means an integrated system approach to treating wastewater consisting of one or more distributed wastewater treatment units (DWTU).
- **DWTU** – A “distributed wastewater treatment unit” means an advanced onsite closed-tank wastewater treatment system that is remotely operated and controlled by the permittee using an electronic control system and designed to achieve secondary treatment standards and a minimum of 80% total nitrogen (TN) removal before discharge to a subsurface application system.
- There are existing permits issued for DWTSs in various districts.
- Recent legislation passed (SB 796 in the 2025 legislative session) that grants a general permit for the replacement of an existing onsite sewage treatment and disposal system (OSTDS) with a DWTS.



SYSTEM CONCEPT

The “system,” or DWTS, is comprised of:

- A group (e.g., one or more) of small, onsite treatment units with onsite subsurface disposal.
 - Units provide higher levels of treatment than traditional septic systems.
 - Units serve one or more houses or buildings.
- An electronic control system.
 - Monitors DWTU operation remotely.
 - Controls the operation of the DWTU remotely.
- DWTS permittee.
 - Responsible for the group of DWTUs in the DWTS.
 - Typically, a county, city or utility.





DWTS AND DWTU OPERATION

- Operated remotely by a certified operator using an electronic control system.
- Sampling is conducted monthly on a representative number of DWTUs.
- DWTS and DWTU “visits” are conducted remotely.
- Periodic inspections of DWTUs are conducted by the permittee.





SB 796

DWTS Overview



SB 796 OVERVIEW

- 2025 Florida Legislative Session.
- Title - “General Permits for Distributed Wastewater Treatment Systems.”
- Passed by the Legislature; signed by Governor DeSantis with an effective date of July 1, 2025.
- Provides for:
 - A general permit is granted for the replacement of an existing OSTDS with a DWTS if the DWTS and DWTU are commonly owned and operated by the permittee.
 - Permittee submits notification to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) at least 30 days before installation (installation may proceed without further action by DEP).
 - DWTU designed by a Florida registered professional.
 - Design capacity of DWTU does not exceed 10,000 gallon per day (gpd) of domestic wastewater or 5,000 gpd of commercial wastewater.



SB 796 SYSTEM DETAILS

- Also provides for:
 - Definitions of DWTS and DWTU.
 - DWTS – system of treating wastewater using one or more DWTUs.
 - DWTU – advanced onsite closed-tank wastewater treatment system; remotely operated using electronic control system; designed to achieve secondary treatment and 80% TN reduction; and discharges to a subsurface application system.
 - DWTU may discharge without disinfection into a slow-rate subsurface application system and must maintain current separation, and in no case less than 12 inches of separation, between the bottom of the drainfield and water table elevation at the wettest season of the year (i.e., seasonal high water table).
 - Horizontal setback distances must be consistent with rules adopted under Chapter 403 and 381, Florida Statutes, e.g. Chapter 62-6, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.).



SB 796 OPERATIONAL DETAILS

- Also provides for:
 - Permittee has legal access to maintain and operate the DWTU and remove the DWTU in case of termination of service.
 - Permittee submits a plan for conducting monthly compliance sampling of a representative number of DWTUs; results may be aggregated to determine compliance.
 - Operation of a DWTU must not create saturated conditions on the ground surface; adversely impact wetlands or surface water; or cause or contribute to violation of state water quality standards.
 - Monthly reporting, annual inspections, recordkeeping, biosolids management.
 - Staffing and visitation by licensed operators; visitation may be conducted through an electronic control system.



RULEMAKING

DWTS Overview



RULEMAKING

- Wastewater Management Program has initiated rulemaking to revise and add clarification on the inclusion of DWTs for domestic wastewater facilities and activities permitting.
- Notices of Rule Development (NORD) published March 27, 2025.
 - Chapter 62-620, F.A.C., Wastewater Facilities and Activities Permitting – minor updates.
 - Chapter 62-621, F.A.C., Generic Permits – no changes currently planned.
 - Chapter 62-699, F.A.C., Treatment Plant Classification and Staffing – minor changes for operator staffing; addresses DWTs.
- Chapter 62-600, F.A.C., Domestic Wastewater Facilities – NORD published June 6, 2025.
 - New Rule 62-600.707, F.A.C., proposed to specifically address new and replacement DWTs and DWTUs (design, capacities, setbacks, monitoring, parameter limits, recordkeeping, reporting, bill-related items and forms, etc.).



EXISTING DWTS PERMITS

DWTS Overview



EXISTING DWTS PERMITS

- Wastewater Facilities Regulation Permitting Application (WAFR PA) Permit Types:
 - DW1T – Domestic Wastewater Type I Satellite Treatment System Permit.
 - DW2T – Domestic Wastewater Type II Satellite Treatment System Permit.
 - DW3T – Domestic Wastewater Type III Satellite Treatment System Permit.
 - DW4T – Domestic Wastewater Type III (less than 10,000 gpd) Satellite Treatment System Permit.
- The “satellite treatment system” terminology was developed to accommodate the first planned DWTS permit.
- OCULUS – To search for DWTS permits, filter “Facility Type” field using the selection of “Satellite Treatment System.”
- A new permit type is being developed specifically for DWTS permits.



LISTING OF DWTS PERMITS FROM WAFR PA

| Office | County | Application # | Facility/Site Name | Agency Action |
|--------|------------|--------------------|--|---------------|
| CD | Lake | FLAB07156-002-DW3T | Lake Apopka Field Station On-Syte System | Issued |
| CD | Orange | FLAB07192-001-DW3T | City of Apopka DWTS | Issued |
| CD | Lake | FLAB07446-001-DW3T | Lake Nellie Crossing DWTS | Issued |
| CD | Seminole | FLAB07457-001-DW3T | Magnolia Townhomes DWTS | Issued |
| CD | Lake | FLAB07478-001-DW4T | Mount Dora Small Bay DWTS | Issued |
| NED | Gilchrist | FLAB07194-001-DW3T | Nature Coast Regional Water Authority DWTS | Issued |
| NED | Gilchrist | FLAB07195-001-DW3T | Pine Ridge RV Park WWTF | Issued |
| NED | Nassau | FLAB07137-003-DW3T | Dayspring Health | Pending |
| NWD | Santa Rosa | FLAB07404-002-DW2T | Santa Rosa County DWTS - Baxley Road Subdivision | Issued |
| NWD | Gulf | FLAB07501-001-DW3T | Wetappo Creek RV Park | Pending |
| SWD | Polk | FLAB07110-001-DW3T | Town of Lake Hamilton DWTU | Issued |



QUESTIONS?

DWTS Overview



THANK YOU

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