

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH



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Environmental Health and Drinking Water Branch

Circular Letter EHDW #2024-16

Date: April 15, 2024

To: Directors of Health
Code Advisory Committee CT
Septic Tank Pre-casters

From: Matthew A. Pawlik, PE, RS 
Supervising Environmental Engineer
Environmental Engineering Program

Re: Secondary Safety Device or Lid, Risers & Safety Devices

On January 1, 2024 the Department of Public Health published a revision to the *Technical Standards for Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems* (Technical Standards) that includes revised access requirements for sewage tanks (septic tanks, pump chambers, grease interceptor tanks, and holding tanks). The purpose of the revision is to provide a secondary safety measure for sewage tanks when the original tank cover is removed, and a riser assembly is utilized. As plastic risers and cover assemblies are more commonly used, the removal of the original concrete sewage tank covers has become more of a concern. Riser covers can be susceptible to cracking and failing from heavy point loads or to dislodging if not secured properly to the riser assembly. Use of a secondary safety lid or device can help prevent a person from falling into a sewage tank if the riser cover fails or dislodges.

If a riser cover weighs less than 100 pounds, then the sewage tank cover shall remain on the tank or a secondary safety lid or device must be provided beneath the riser cover. This requirement applies to both new and existing sewage tanks. The Technical Standards continue to recommend that sewage tank covers be left in place on the access and cleanout openings for safety reasons when riser assemblies are utilized. Leaving tank covers in place also helps to avoid potential odor problems.



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The Technical Standards now define a secondary safety lid or device as:

“A sewage tank access safety device installed below a riser cover that is commercially manufactured for the purpose of preventing accidental entry into sewage tanks. Sewage tank access safety devices can be either a secondary cover on the tank access opening, or a product manufactured and sold as a safety device that is installed below the riser cover. The manufactured device shall be capable of withstanding a minimum 200 pound dead load.”

Third party testing of the secondary safety lid or device is strongly recommended to ensure compliance with minimum load requirements.

The approximate weight of a concrete cover may be determined using the table below:

Diameter (circular)	Minimum thickness	Approx. Weight
18 inches and greater	5 inches	≥100 lbs
20 inches and greater	4 inches	≥100 lbs
23 inches and greater	3 inches	≥100 lbs

Cast iron covers 24 inches in diameter or larger typically weigh more than 100 pounds. If a cast iron cover is smaller than 24 inches in diameter, then the licensed installer should provide information from the manufacturer on the weight of the cover or perform a field assessment to determine the actual weight.

Please note that the Technical Standards require all new and existing septic tanks that exceed a depth of 12 inches below grade be retrofitted with a riser and cover assembly such that the top of the riser assembly is no more than 12 inches below grade to help facilitate tank pumping and inspections. Additionally, the Technical Standards requires that all pump chambers, grease interceptor tanks, and holding tanks have watertight risers extended to grade. Property owners should contact a licensed sewage tank cleaner or installer for more information on options to help comply with these requirements.

c: Carmen Chaparro, Interim Section Chief, Environmental Health Section