

Informed Decision-Making: Advanced OWTS

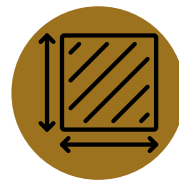
Need an advanced system?

Whether your upgrade is required or voluntary, there are many things to consider as you work with industry professionals

Advanced onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS) are required by law in some areas, but can also be a good choice if you wish to reduce the disturbance to your property if site conditions are challenging. There are many different kinds of advanced systems to choose from. Different technologies are designed to treat different types of contaminants present in wastewater, and employ a variety of engineered components to help biological processes achieve improved wastewater treatment. As a significant investment in your property's infrastructure and long-term value, it makes sense to learn all you can before initiating a major project like this.



Advanced systems are required by regulations in nutrient and pathogen-sensitive areas, like along the coast or near drinking water sources



Advanced systems can have a smaller footprint than conventional systems on sites with many constraints, which makes them popular in some inland areas



Routine maintenance is critical to system function, performance and longevity. Advanced systems should be serviced at least twice a year



Advanced systems incur ongoing monthly and yearly costs, in addition to initial system design and installation costs

Important considerations

These questions are designed to guide you in your decision-making process. You may find it helpful to consult appropriate regulatory authorities, municipal personnel and/or review other resources before reaching out to 2-3 different wastewater professionals - it is good to be an informed and selective consumer. Be sure to inquire about financing logistics and options, including grants and low-interest loans that may be available in your community.

Selecting a Contractor

- How long has the company been in business / what is their reputation like?
 - Is there a portfolio of past projects or list of clients to contact?
- What services does this company provide?
- What kind of training / certifications does the professional have?
 - What kind of continuing education / training do they participate in?
- What is their availability / timeline like?
- What if there's a problem during or after the job?

Design Considerations

- A thorough site visit / assessment should be part of the process
 - Future home / site improvement plans?
- What are the recommended technology options? Why?
 - Is the technology approved by state/local regulations to achieve the level of wastewater treatment you need?
- Where will each component go in my yard? Are there alternate options?
- How resilient is this system to climate change?

System Cost

- What is the total cost of the proposed system, initially?
 - Design / Site Evaluation
 - Installation
 - Electrical work (if needed)
 - Plumbing work (if needed)
 - Contingencies / special requests
 - How will unanticipated changes to the cost of the system be handled?
- How much electricity will the system use monthly?
- What is the annual cost of typical maintenance contract?

Operation & Maintenance

- How does the system work?
- What is my responsibility as the system user?
- What businesses / individuals in the area are trained to perform maintenance on this technology / system type?
 - What are their qualifications?
 - Is there choice among providers?
- What does a typical maintenance contract include?
 - How often do service providers visit?
 - What typically happens at each visit?
 - Are there predictable additional costs not covered by the contract?

Other Priorities

- How well does the system perform? Have any third parties verified this?
- What will it look like when it is installed?
 - What kind of equipment and site disturbance will be involved?
- What is the timeline for this project?
- How will you handle special requests?
- Other questions / priorities you have about aspects of your property

