

What is Domestic Septage?

Domestic septage is the liquid or solid material removed from a septic tank, cesspool, portable toilet, type III marine sanitation device, or a similar system that receives only household, non-commercial and non-industrial wastes.



Household activities include the normal bathroom and kitchen activities done at home by the residents living in that household such as toilet use, residential dish and clothes washing, and showering.

What is Non-Domestic Septage?

Non-Domestic Septage is also known as commercial or industrial septage. It includes any waste generated by non-household activities that is discharged as wastewater into a septic tank, cesspool, portable toilet, or type III marine sanitation device.



Some examples of Non-Domestic septage:

- A hair salon operating out of someone's home
- An auto mechanic's shop attached to the owner's home
- A school that uses industrial grade cleaning chemicals

"The factor that differentiates commercial and industrial septage from domestic septage is not the type of establishment generating waste, rather it is the type of waste being produced" (EPA).



Document Objective

Dealing with emerging contaminants is a challenge for wastewater disposal facilities, especially if they are producing solids or biosolids for beneficial use / land application.

Because of this, some wastewater treatment facilities are beginning to screen for PFAS and other emerging contaminants. These facilities know that this screening is necessary to ensure they provide a quality fertilizer or soil conditioner to their customers, and to maintain public acceptance of their materials.

This document is to help septage haulers and wastewater operators distinguish the difference between domestic and non-domestic septage, and to help familiarize these haulers and operators with the screening programs that may be in place to monitor for emerging contaminants.

Useful Links

NEBRA Sampling Guidance:

<https://www.nebiosolids.org/pfas-sampling-analysis-guidance>

Merrimack WWTF Septage Permit Application:

https://www.merrimacknh.gov/sites/g/files/vyhliif3456/f/file/file/septage_permit_application.pdf

Wastewater Operator and Septage Hauler PFAS* Guidance

**PFAS stands for "Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances" and is a group of manmade chemicals considered 'contaminants of emerging concern (CECs)'*

Drafted by:

The Northeast Biosolids Improvement Program

Including...

- The importance of keeping PFAS out of biosolids
- What is and isn't Domestic Septage?
- What can WWTF professionals do to address these contaminants?

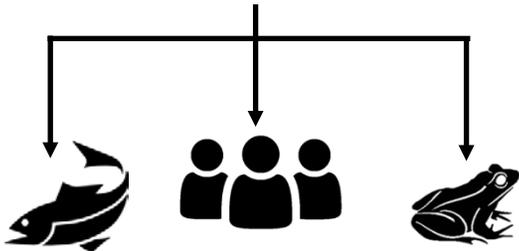


What are Emerging Contaminants?

The EPA defines emerging contaminants to include: PFAS, Pharmaceuticals, Pesticides, Personal care products, Industrial solvents and chemicals, Explosives, Inorganics, and Gasoline additives.



” Contaminants of emerging concern (CECs), including pharmaceuticals and personal care products (PPCPs), are increasingly being detected at low levels in surface water, and there is concern that these compounds may have an impact on aquatic life. It is important for the EPA to be able to evaluate the potential impact of CECs and PPCPs on aquatic life and have an approach for determining protective levels for aquatic organisms” (EPA).



Turning Sludge into Biosolids

Wastewater treatment facilities generate sludge from the operations at their plant. On the surface this sludge may seem useless, but the sludge can be recycled into a fertilizer known as biosolids. Biosolids are very useful and can be used to revitalize agricultural lands and public parks and gardens.



The chemical quality of the wastewater facility’s fertilizer is very important not only for the customers using the product, but also for the environment. These fertilizer programs have sampling and analysis plans that determine if the biosolids made are safe for use as a fertilizer.



Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are emerging contaminants facilities which generate biosolids don’t want to flow into their plant. It is important to understand how much PFAS enters a WWTF, since PFAS will be included in regulatory limits across the United States in the future.

Why Conduct Septage Screenings?



To comply with incoming PFAS regulations, some wastewater facilities may set up testing programs to screen domestic and non-domestic septage coming into the plant for PFAS or other emerging contaminants.

It is important for the septage hauler to be in communication with their receiving facility to check if a screening program is in place and how to comply.

The hauler will determine from customer information the type of septage and how it is best disposed. Some facilities that do not run biosolids recycling programs may not test for emerging contaminants and may have less restrictions on the chemical quality from septage received at the facility.

