



# County of Santa Cruz

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## HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY

701 OCEAN STREET, ROOM 312, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060-4073  
(831) 454-2022 FAX: (831) 454-3128 TDD: (831) 454-4123

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

[www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/eh/ehhome.htm](http://www.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/eh/ehhome.htm)

### **INFORMATION ON SERVICE CHARGES FOR COUNTY SERVICE AREA NO. 12 SEPTIC SYSTEM MAINTENANCE AND MANAGEMENT**

There are approximately 22,000 septic systems in the rural areas of Santa Cruz County. Successful long term use of septic systems requires that they be properly maintained to protect public health and prevent water pollution. County Service Area No. 12 (CSA 12) provides services to promote proper septic system function and maintenance. In order to finance these services, property owners with septic systems are paying annual service charges on their tax bills, as described below:

#### **County-wide Septic System Maintenance - CSA 12**

In order for septic tanks to be properly maintained, they must be pumped out regularly to remove accumulated solids. Regular pumping is dependent on the availability of a suitable location for disposal of the septic tank sludge. The CSA 12 fees provide funding to pay for permanent facilities for the collection and treatment of septic tank sludge at the City of Watsonville and City of Santa Cruz Sewage Treatment Plants. The CSA 12 fees also fund administration of the septic tank sludge disposal program, public education on septic system maintenance, and maintenance of a computerized record keeping system of septic tank pumping, inspections, and repairs. The annual charge for these programs is \$6.90 for each parcel served by a septic system.

#### **San Lorenzo Watershed Septic System Management - CSA 12A**

The San Lorenzo River Watershed area has an even greater need for proper septic system management than the rest of the County. The area has a very high density of septic systems and any pollution from septic system failures will have impact on the San Lorenzo River, which is used for water supply and recreation. Because of these potential problems some areas of the Valley were subject to wastewater discharge prohibitions imposed by the State from 1982-1995. In order to remove these prohibitions, the County implemented a comprehensive wastewater management program for the San Lorenzo Watershed which provides for: regular water quality testing to identify problems, field inspections and evaluations of all septic systems approximately once every six years, and other efforts to promote better wastewater management. This increased level of management is partially funded by an annual fee of \$18.54 paid by all properties with septic systems in the San Lorenzo Watershed, an area which is designated as Zone A of CSA 12. This charge is in addition to the annual county wide CSA 12 charge of \$6.90.

#### **Septic Systems with Special Operating Characteristics**

Over 300 septic systems with special operating characteristics have been approved for use in Santa Cruz County. These include alternative technology systems, haulaway systems, or nonconforming systems which do not meet standards for a conventional system. These systems require regular inspection and monitoring by County staff or a certified Onsite System Service Provider to ensure they are functioning properly. An annual CSA 12N service charge of \$790, \$316, \$158, or \$79, depending on the type of system, is charged on the tax bill of these properties, in addition to the other applicable CSA 12 and 12A charges listed above.

For additional information on these programs, contact the Santa Cruz County Environmental Health Service at (831) 454-2022.