



Barry-Eaton District Health Department

Be Active • Be Safe • Be Healthy

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TOST Program Improvement Highlights

The Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD) is continuing to improve its Time of Sale or Transfer (TOST) program to make it easier for everyone. BEDHD made changes to TOST in September 2015. These changes have made the program better in several areas, including communications, the decision appeal process, correction options, evaluation criteria, and evaluation categories.

Who has BEDHD worked with in improving the TOST program?

Local citizens, township officials, Registered Evaluators (REs), and realtors have all helped to improve TOST. BEDHD regularly gets feedback from these groups and uses the feedback in its improvement plans.

How is BEDHD working to improve public understanding of the TOST program?

BEDHD has developed a TOST public promotion plan. This plan includes regular press releases, Facebook posts, and website updates that help to educate the public. The education is not just on TOST itself but also on on-site wells and sewage systems in general. Topics include how wells and sewage systems work, the best ways to keep them well maintained, the importance to public and environmental health of maintaining them, and the goals of TOST. Further, BEDHD has put extra resources on its website to help make TOST more understandable.

How has BEDHD made working with property owners going through the TOST program easier?

One-on-one discussions between BEDHD and property owners has helped improve property owners' understanding of TOST, provide them with a clearer picture of their options, and focus on moving forward through the TOST process. In addition, BEDHD now provides notices of decision and other TOST communications through email. It has also improved the online public search service for individuals who want to find records of local properties' on-site wells and sewage systems.

Why has BEDHD changed the TOST evaluation categories?

In the past, TOST put wells and sewage systems that had been evaluated into a *Failed* category or an *Authorized* category. The new categories—*Action Required*, *Action Recommended*, and *No Action Required*—identify what level of action wells and sewage systems need, if any. The category *Action Required* means that a public health risk or necessary maintenance item needs action before authorization can be granted. The *Action Recommended* category allows wells and sewage systems with conditions that before the changes would have been failed to now be authorized for transfer, while at the same time suggesting that serious thought be given to making recommended changes.

How has BEDHD improved the evaluation process for Registered Evaluators (REs)?

BEDHD has updated the TOST evaluation criteria, which REs must follow when completing an evaluation. The REs were given ample time to review, comment on, and make suggestions for improving the new criteria. Improved software also makes it easier for REs to access BEDHD's reports.

How is BEDHD helping property owners whose wells and sewage systems are found to be failed?

First, BEDHD has changed the "Notice of Failure" to a "Notice of Action Required" and changed the language used in notices in order to reflect the goal of the TOST program: to make sure that wells and sewage systems don't have issues that might hurt public or environmental health. The format of the Notices of Action Required has been changed to a question-and-answer format to help property owners understand what steps will happen next. This new letter has been well received and found by the public to be easier to understand.

BEDHD has also highlighted the appeal process, making property owners going through TOST more clear on their right to appeal BEDHD's decision and explaining how to file an appeal. Lastly, there are now more options for property owners to correct issues, including allowing maintenance agreements for certain necessary maintenance items instead of funding an escrow account.

For more information on the TOST program, visit the BEDHD TOST website at <http://bit.ly/1qk3kCN>.

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