



Mendocino County Health and Human Services Agency

Healthy People, Healthy Communities

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 5, 2009
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Septic System Guidelines for New Second Residential Units

"This new policy is the best thing the County has done for affordable housing in 30 years," stated Chairman John Pinches, Mendocino County Board of Supervisors. The Division of Environmental Health (DEH) has adopted new guidelines for allowing the development of second residential units. In an effort to accommodate the need for affordable housing in the County, DEH will allow new second residential units to be connected to an existing septic system, provided certain conditions can be met. "Property owners can realize a potential savings of \$15,000 to \$30,000 by not having to install a new septic system when they add a second unit to their property," commented Pinches.

Second residential units up to 1,000 square feet with one bedroom will be allowed to connect to an existing septic system if the system is in good repair and meets all current requirements. Additionally, a suitable area for a replacement leach field must be located on the property. If the second residential unit has more than one bedroom, for each bedroom over one, a bedroom in the primary residence must be converted to another use. The new guidelines are consistent with established policy that allow for the addition of one bedroom to a primary residence without expanding the existing septic system.

Over the last twelve years approximately 250 bedroom additions have been allowed with no known septic system failures as a result. Additionally, one bedroom family care units have been allowed to connect to existing septic systems without problem. All applicable building code requirements under Mendocino County Planning & Building Services must be met, and the guidelines do not apply in the Coastal Zone where there is a prohibition against the development of second residential units. For more information, please contact the Health and Human Services Division of Environmental Health at 463-4466.



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