

CANTERWOOD DIVISION 12 STEP ASSOCIATION

STEP System Fees and Procedure List Charges and fees effective December 1, 2004 (Updated December 18, 2013 and May 9, 2017)

All lots within Canterwood Division 12 (Lots 1-71) are served by a STEP sewer system. A STEP (Septic Tank Effluent Pumped) system consists of septic tanks used for settling and digesting waste water solids, a pump and pump chamber, and a pressure piping system for conveying the liquid into the main sewer system. The main sewer line is connected to and discharges into the Gig Harbor Sewer System.

The private and common STEP sewer system to which each lot discharges into is operated and maintained by the Canterwood Division 12 STEP Association. Each of the 71 lot owners within the Division 12 Plat is a member of this Association. The "Canterwood Division 12 STEP Association" is separate and independent from the "Canterwood STEP Association" which serves the remainder of the lots within the Canterwood Master Plan community.

The following provides a general overview of the STEP program within the Division 12 Plat;

1. ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP: All lots within Division 12 will be connected to the STEP System and all homeowners of lots within Division 12 shall become members of the Canterwood Division 12 STEP Association upon connecting their STEP system to the Division 12 STEP sewer line.
2. HOME OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITY: The homeowner is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the STEP System components located on their lot to the outlet valve located near the property line (see attached drawing). This includes but is not limited to: septic tanks, pump, piping, valves and associated electrical equipment.
Note: It is the Building Contractor and the Home Owners' responsibility to assure that the outlet valve is in an open position prior to or at the time of occupancy.
3. CANTERWOOD DIVISION 12 STEP ASSOCIATION RESPONSIBILITY: The STEP Association is responsible for operation and maintenance of the STEP System from, and including, the outlet/shutoff valve, located near the property line, to the point of discharge to the City of Gig Harbor's sewer system. This includes, but is not limited to, the pressure main, effluent treatment system, related valves and structures and electrical equipment to operate the systems.
4. CONNECTION FEES: The sewer connection charges and fees are required for each lot. The current connection charges and fees per lot are as follows:

City of Gig Harbor

\$3050.00 City of Gig Harbor Sewer Connection Fee (Previously paid by developer)
\$150.00 City As-built Deposit (Paid at time of building permit by builder)
\$ 130.00 City Inspection Fee (Paid at time of building permit by builder)

CW Div. 12 STEP Assoc. (Connection/Membership Fee)

\$ 1500.00 (To be paid by first home buyer)

This connection/membership fee is to be paid at Escrow by the first buyer of the new home. The connection/membership fee transfers with any re-sale of the home and is not required with subsequent sales of the home.

These charges and fees are subject to change without notice.

5. DESIGNS: All designs, permits, installation and inspections and their related fees will be provided for under the home construction contract.
6. SEWER AVAILABILITY: Rush Division 12 LLC has secured an availability and sewer capacity agreement with the City of Gig Harbor for the Canterwood Division 12 sewer service. The City of Gig Harbor will provide an individual letter of sewer availability at the time of building permit review. Pierce County requires a sewer availability letter for a building permit. This will be provided for under the home construction contract.
7. INSTALLATION: Installation of a STEP System, including inspection, will be coordinated between the builder and the buyer/owner at the time of construction of the home and provided for under the home construction contract.
8. AS-BUILT: As-built drawings of the STEP System will be completed and provided for by the builder.
9. MONTHLY CHARGES: A home will be considered "connected" to the STEP system when it is inspected and approved by the City and final occupancy has been obtained. At that time, the sewerage service charges will begin. The "monthly" sewerage service charges are currently \$900 per month.
10. LANDSCAPING: Homeowner must have the valve box and both tank risers exposed. No landscaping will be allowed to cover these access covers. It will be the responsibility of the Homeowner to ensure that access is available at all times.

STEP SYSTEM - HOMEOWNER INFORMATION

The STEP system for your home provides several advantages over the traditional septic system. First, there is no drain field and that eliminates the major source of failures in septic systems. Second, portions of your home site do not have to be dedicated to a drain field or a reserve drain field area.

As the attached diagram illustrates, a STEP system consists of a septic tank and an effluent or pump tank. All solid waste remains in the septic tank and only the liquid effluent moves on to the pump tank and then on to the effluent pipe in the street. The pump is controlled by a series of floats and is electrically connected to a control panel on the side of your home. The control panel contains on/off switches, relays, fuses and an alarm which will sound if the pump stops operating. If the alarm is sounding, a red button on the box also lights up.

Maintenance of your STEP System

Homeowners are responsible for maintaining all the elements of the STEP system up to the shutoff valve.

Q. Since I still have a septic tank, how do I know when to pump it?

A. Generally, most septic tanks are pumped every 3 to 5 years. The timing is dependent on the number of bedrooms and people using the system. Also a garbage disposal can add 20 to 30% more solids to the system and reduce the time between pumping the tank.

Q. I am not sure where my septic and pump tanks are buried. How do I find it'?

A. Tanks have risers which are large plastic pipes with a lid at ground level that keeps an open hole down to the tank lid for easy access. The lids are typically green fiberglass about 2 feet in diameter. The lids need to be securely fastened to the riser to preclude entry of debris or surface water.

Q. What do I have to do to the pump tank and the pump?

A. Unless the pump stops operating, no maintenance is required. A riser is on the pump tank with a green lid on top so it is easy to inspect. It is important to be sure the lid is fitted to the top of the riser to prevent any outside debris from entering the pump chamber.

Q. If the pump alarm on the control panel goes off, what do I do?

A. The alarm indicates the effluent tank is full and the pump is not operating, or the tank is empty but the pump has not stopped operating. You can silence the alarm by pushing the red button on the front of the control panel. The button will stay lit to indicate there is a problem. At this point you can lift the lid on the pump riser and inspect the pump chamber. Unless there is some obvious problem that can be easily remedied, a homeowner would not likely be able to repair the pump or its systems.

In some cases, after a power outage, the alarm will sound. After silencing the alarm, the control panel can be opened and the pump cycled by the use of a toggle switches that have three positions: "automatic", "off", and "manual". Shutting the pump off and then returning it to the "automatic" position will usually reset the system. If it does not, other problems may be indicated and professional service is required. TIP: Ask a neighbor who has been here awhile and you may find the "trick" to return everything to normal.

Q. If the power does go out, can I still flush the toilets?

A. The capacity of the liquid tank is dependent on when the pump did its last cycle and pumped the effluent to the line in the street. If you inspect the pump chamber you will be able to see the level of the liquid. A low level could give you several days of usage but you should reduce liquid input during the outage.

Q. Other than the pump alarm, how would I know there is a problem in my STEP system?

A. Waste water could back up into a toilet or tub in your home. The first item to check is the clean-out (two feet from the foundation of your home) to see if there is a blockage in the pipe before the septic tank. If you want to do it yourself, a plumber's snake is the tool to use but it can be a messy undertaking. The most common cause of a backup is a full septic tank followed by a plugged filter. Problems can also be caused by the disposal of cat litter or disposable diaper into the system.

The control panel does contain a circuit breaker for the pump but if it has tripped, it can indicate a problem with the pump circuit.

Q. Once the effluent reaches the pipe in the street are there more pumps?

A. There are no booster pumps in the system. The small amount of pressure exerted by each household system pumping into the main line in the street is sufficient to keep everything moving along until it reaches a vault near the gate on Baker Way. After that point, gravity is used to take the effluent to the Gig Harbor wastewater treatment plant.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

A STEP (Septic Tank Effluent Pump) system consists of septic tanks used for settling and digesting waste water solids, a pump and pump chamber, and a pressure piping system for conveying the liquid into the main sewer system.

The main sewer line is connected to and discharges into the City of Gig Harbor Sewer System and is treated at the City's wastewater treatment plant.

The private and common STEP sewer system to which each lot discharges into is operated and maintained by the Canterwood Division 12 STEP Association.

The following provides a general overview of the STEP System program within the Division 12 Plat:

1. HOME OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITY: The homeowner is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the STEP System components located on their lot to the outlet/shutoff valve located near the property line. This includes but is not limited to: septic tanks, pump, piping, valves and associated electrical equipment.
2. CANTERWOOD DIVISION 12 STEP SYSTEM ASSOCIATION RESPONSIBILITY:
The STEP System Association is responsible for operation and maintenance of the STEP System from, and including, the outlet/shutoff valve, located near the property line, to the point of discharge to the City of Gig Harbor's sewer system. This includes, but is not limited to, the pressure main, effluent treatment system, related valves and structures and electrical equipment to operate the systems
3. MONTHLY CHARGES:

The CW Div. 12 STEP System Association is responsible for the payment of City of Gig Harbor sewage treatment charges and for the cost of operation and maintenance the Association owned portion of the STEP System.

* The Association Dues cover annual costs that include: service contract for O&M of the pressure main, effluent treatment system, chemicals, valves and electrical equipment to operate the system. This rate is reviewed by the CW Division 12 STEP Association annually to verify the appropriateness of the rate to their system costs.

