



Onsite

ONTARIO ONSITE WASTEWATER ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER
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Updated Standard for Septic Tanks Aims to Increase Safety

By: Don Krauss, Infiltrator Water Technologies

The National Standard of Canada updates the standard for design, materials and manufacturing requirements for prefabricated septic tanks and sewage holding tanks known as B66 on a 5-year cycle. The newest edition of B66-21 has now been published after going through the typical update, review, public review, and committee consultation process.

For many years there has been discussion and debate focused on the safety surrounding the access openings on septic tanks and holding tanks. Fatalities have been recorded in multiple states and provinces over the years due to loosely fitted or open tank lids in both public and private decentralized wastewater systems.

One of the major changes to the CSA B66 standard is the mandatory requirement for secondary safety screens in all septic and holding tanks with access openings over 8 inches/200mm in diameter that are brought to the surface. This is a big change for the standard that will have an impact on everything from cost of materials and septic system installations to the pump out procedure of tanks fitted with these devices.



The standard – now published and available for purchase through the CSA Group, is clear in its wording that the intent is that the installation of safety devices is part of B66 compliance and reads as follows...

CSA B66:21 – Latest Edition published October 2021

4.2.6 Access openings 4.2.6.3 Risers

When risers above the tank access opening are provided, the manufacturer shall construct the tank in such a way that all joints between the tank access opening and the risers, as well as between all riser sections, are watertight. All access openings (which are meant to be removed) over chambers with an opening greater than 200 mm in diameter, where there is a risk of accidental entry, shall have a secondary safety device that can withstand 91 kg of dead load.

Note: See Clause 4.1.3 for requirements for joints made on-site

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Updated Standard for Septic Tanks Aims to Increase Safety

Story continued from front cover

The question is now – how long will it take the regulatory process to catch up? Because the new edition of the standard was just recently released, this change is not yet well known and it would be reasonable to say that it may catch the MMAH and most of the regulatory community by surprise, and not just here in Ontario. The Ontario Building Code references the CSA B66 standard by name several times throughout Sections 8.2.2.2. and 8.2.2.3. The CSA Group technical advisory committee responsible for adopting this edition of B66 did not even have a single response on this change from the public review process. It is very likely that there will not be a migration of this new requirement until the 2022 season begins and it will probably be phased in over the season. The implementation may be faster if it is deemed a public health and safety update – which it should be.

Reaching out to other provinces who reference B66 in their regulation and technical guidelines regarding onsite wastewater systems, the response has been the same. Most are just receiving the updated standard now and, in most provinces, the regulatory review process will take place over the winter months resulting in a possible spring adoption.

Going forward we will see safety devices as standard equipment in septic tank and holding tank installations – that’s a fact. But what of onsite and decentralized wastewater systems and holding tanks that are already out there? Will we see this requirement become retroactive? Will regulation language include existing access openings or upgrades to tanks already installed that did not have surface access points? If so, how will they be policed? How will principal authorities ensure that this public safety regulatory update is enforced? We will see how this unfolds in 2022 and how ready, the industry is. Most manufacturers of risers and riser components have had a solution for this for many years already.



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