LASSEN COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT

(530) 251-8528 Fax (530) 251-2668

PERCOLATION TEST PROCEDURE:

All percolation testing shall be performed by a Professional Engineer, Engineering Geologist, Registered Environmental Health Specialist, or an A, B, C-36, or C-42 licensed septic contractor with experience in onsite sewage disposal.

The object in conducting percolation tests of soil, in which a drain field or seepage pit is to be installed, is to determine the length of time required for the soil to absorb one inch of water when the ground has been saturated. The information obtained from these tests, together with knowledge of the approximate amount and type of sewage to be discharged, makes it possible to determine the size of the drain field necessary for a trouble free system.

Holes approximately 4 to 6 inches in diameter have been found to be the most convenient. However, this diameter is not critical and, particularly in very loose soils, it may be easier to dig larger holes. Sides of the holes should be vertical and the depth should be approximately that of the proposed drain field (36"). The holes (2 or more) should be approximately 30 feet apart and in the area where the drain field will be installed.

- 1. The sides should be roughed up to eliminate packing caused by the shovel or posthole digger, which would reduce the percolation rate. Two inches of fine gravel should be placed in the hole to prevent bottom scoring.
- 2. Fill the hole with clear water, being careful to avoid washing down the sides of the hole. By refilling, if necessary, keep at least 24 inches of water in the hole for at least 24 hours. After the above saturation, start with 6 inches of water above the gravel (add water if necessary) and begin the measurements.
- 3. Select a reference point from which to measure (a board laid across the mouth of the hole is satisfactory) and measure the distance from the reference point to the level of the water. Enter the time and distance measured on the chart below.
- 4. Repeat the measurement at the end of 30 minutes. Continue making measurements at 30-minute intervals for 4 hours.
- 5. If the water level drops too low for further readings, refill to the 6-inch level at the end of a 30-minute period, measure, and proceed as before.
- 6. If the hole consistently drains in less than 30 minutes, make readings at 10-minute intervals for 1 hour.

