

Mariposa County Health Department

CHARLES B. MOSHER, M.D.
County Health Officer

4988 Eleventh Street
P.O. Box 5
Mariposa, CA. 95338
(209) 966-3689

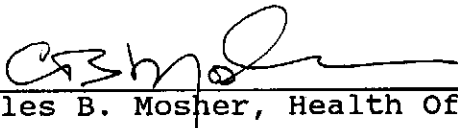
MARIPOSA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

NECESSARY SOIL DEPTH FOR LAND DIVISIONS

NO. 91-16

This policy modifies items in the policy memo regarding Health Department review of LDA's dated July 20, 1990 (attached).

In cases where eight feet of soil (as defined by policy 91-6) has not been encountered after several attempts on a proposed lot, the Health Department will consider soil depth of as little as six feet for adequacy to install a standard sewage disposal system on a case by case basis.



Charles B. Mosher, Health Officer

8-29-91

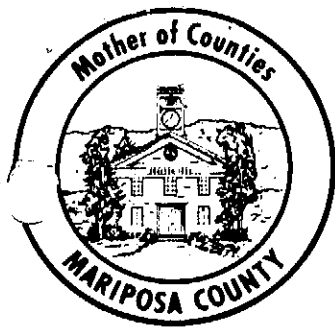
Date



Richard Blood, REHS II

9-5-91

Date



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July 20, 1990

TO : Persons Involved in the LLA-LDA Process

FROM : Charles B. Mosher, MD
Mariposa County Health Officer

SUBJECT: Health Department Review of LLAs and LDAs

There have been some questions recently about the process within the Health Department for the review of LLAs and LDAs triggered, you won't be surprised to hear, by our actions of denying a couple of these. What we want to do with this letter is to let you know the criteria by which we evaluate these applications and what we are looking for. Hopefully, that will make it easier on all of you who are representing clients and doing work prior to its arrival in our office.

What we are trying to do is protect both the environment and the eventual owner of a proposed lot who will need to develop a well and sewage disposal system. We want to know that a given lot will support a conventional sewage disposal system before the lot is created. Percolation tests and soils profiles assist the Sanitarian with his assessment and decision in this regard.

The criteria we follow are:

1. Adequate "set backs" from proposed leach field to wells, streams, cut banks, lakes, reservoirs, and property lines.
2. Soils profiles showing adequate soil (not rock) for a depth of at least five (5) feet below proposed leach field trench bottoms. This usually means soil profiles to eight (8) feet as most trenches are three (3) feet deep, but may require deeper profiles if soils in the upper region are not suitable for sewage disposal.

Health Department Review of LLAs and LDAs

3. Soils should be free of impervious rock, fractured rock (which could act as a conduit connecting leach field to water supply), and mottled soil implying high seasonal groundwater.
4. Percolation tests between 5 and 60 minutes per inch.

These criteria are not arbitrary: they are consistent with the Rules and Regulations for on-site sewage disposal system adopted by the Board of Supervisors several years ago, and with Guidelines for Waste Disposal for Land Developments established by the Regional Water Quality Control Board pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Act.

County Code mandates perc tests and soils profiles for minor subdivisions under two circumstances:

1. Lots of under 6 acres;
2. In cases where the Health Department determines that they are "necessary to form a valid opinion and prepare a recommendation."

For major subdivisions, the decision needed is whether individual systems will work or whether a public sewage disposal system will be required, according to, among other things, "the soil condition of the lots..."

We are told that these standards are consistent with what most other Health Departments are doing. We are applying these criteria uniformly to all and trying to avoid another development on poor soil such as that in Don Pedro where purchasers of homes may pay up to \$10,000 for engineered septic systems. These new and more complex sewage disposal systems do not have the proven track record at cleansing sewage before it reaches our underground water that conventional systems do and that is the reason that, statewide, we are attempting to stay with what has been proven to work.

If you have any questions in this regard, please do not hesitate to call. I'm open to discussing this issue with you individually or, as a group if you feel this position needs to be re-evaluated.

If, in the future, you have any dissatisfaction on a decision, feel free to do one of the following:

Health Department Review of LLAs and LDAs

1. Request that your project be reviewed by another Sanitarian.
2. Request a review of our Sanitarian's decision by myself.
3. Request a review of your project by the Regional Water Quality Control Board.
4. Appeal to the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission (as is allowed currently in Code).