

### Frequently Asked Questions:

- Why is this happening?
  - In 1998, water testing in your area showed evidence of e. Coli pollution in excess of 3 MILLION parts per million (ppm) when less than 300 ppm is typical. That started a long, legal process involving the County and Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) forming the district due to all of the failing septic systems in your area, culminating with the system starting service in 2005.
- Am I really required to connect?
  - Yes, by State law, any property capable of discharging wastewater is required to connect the sanitary sewer system by their property with limited exceptions.
- What if my septic system is still working correctly? (**Choice B** in the notice).
  - The district recognizes the significant cost to connect. For any property with a compliant septic system, you may obtain at your own expense an IOWPA certified septic inspector to provide a detailed inspection report to the Howard County Health Department and the district.
  - The property will still be billed monthly per EDU.
  - Per IC 13-26-5-2.5, your system must have a permit on file with the Health Department from when it was installed (new) to qualify for the exemption. **No permit? No exemption possible.**
- What's an EDU?
  - An Equivalent Dwelling Unit (EDU) is a standard measurement used in civil planning and infrastructure management to represent the average wastewater usage of a typical residential household.
- How much does a typical, single-family home get billed each month?
  - \$89.24 (1 EDU) per the current rate ordinance
- On the schedule of fees, I see a FOG surcharge each month. What's that about?
  - A FOG facility discharges fat, oil, and/or grease in excess of the normal, domestic wastewater limits. For a typical single-family home, it is not relevant.
- Why would I still pay a regular, monthly sewer bill if I get a compliant septic system or other connection exemption?
  - The district designed and constructed the system with sufficient capacity to serve your property, incurring millions of dollars of debt to do so. That debt remains unpaid largely because so many property owners failed to connect and begin paying for service since 2005, when the system was finished being built. Every property that could be compelled to connect, should be paying their fair share for the system built for them.
- How do I get an IOWPA certified inspector to maybe avoid the connection costs right now?
  - Here's the IOWPA database to get a certificate for a compliant septic system to satisfy the county health department and the sewer district:
    - <https://members.iowpa.org/search/custom.asp?id=6633> ("Find a professional" > Inspector > "Expiration 90+ days") There are 67 total.
  - The cost of the inspection is negotiable with the certified inspector. A typical inspection could cost about \$1,000.

- My IOWPA certified inspector found several issues or notes on the report. The Howard County Health Department and the district determined my septic system would need to be repaired or replaced to be compliant and get the exemption. Can I repair or replace the system to get the exemption?
  - No, the Howard County Health Department cannot and will not permit a new, replacement, or repair to a septic system for properties that are within the Taylor Regional Sewer District's service area.
- I got an IOWPA certified inspector to demonstrate my septic system is compliant. How long does that exempt my property from connecting to the system?
  - Per IC 13-26-5-2.5, the initial exemption is 10 years with the possibility of renewal twice in 5 year periods. So gaining the statutory exemption now in 2025 lasts until 2035. If successfully renewed, the max exemption period runs until 2045 (20 year total).
  - Regardless, it would be wise to begin saving for future septic decommissioning. An emergency connection due to a failing septic system is a sudden expense.
  - Any property owner given notice to connect in 2005 is not able to gain the statutory exemption, as that 20 year period has already expired. (See below).
- Under Indiana Code (13-26-5-2.5) my property could have been exempt from connection in 2005 when the system was first put into service. Would that exemption still exist?
  - In 2005, the property could have been exempt if there was a newly installed septic system that complies with all regulations. Per State law, the health department and the district would have written documentation of that exemption.
  - The maximum exemption period is 20 years so the timeline would be as follows:
    - originally issued in 2005,
    - renewed in 2015,
    - renewed again in 2020.
  - If there is no record of the exemption original or renewed, your property is not exempt anymore per Indiana Code.
- If I have a vacant lot or farmland with no structures there, do I need to connect?
  - No, a written response (Choice C in the notice) indicating as much informs the district.
- I plan to demolish the structure on my property soon, what should I do?
  - Inform the district of your situation so we can work with you through that process.
- What if I have a parcel with 10 or more acres?
  - A parcel with at least 10 acres may be exempt from connecting if it meets the requirements of Indiana Code and receives a certification from the Howard County Health Department (see IC 13-26-5-2.6 for details).
- Okay, so we're planning to connect. We gave the district a response in writing saying so. What's next? How much does it cost to connect?
  - The district's connection specialist, Allison, will guide you through the process.
  - \$1750 per EDU is paid to the district for a capacity fee, a one-time cost to connect.
  - For a single-family residential building, \$125 is added to the capacity fee for permitting and inspection of the new connection.

- A typical homeowner should budget for \$1875 to pay directly to the district during the connection process.
  - Then, the homeowner should get quotes from qualified contractors to perform all of the work to connect the property (up to district standards & specifications) and decommission their septic system.
    - A typical homeowner should budget for at least \$13,125 to pay their contractor(s) during the connection process.
  - Therefore, a typical homeowner should budget a grand total of about \$15,000 with most of the cost going to a contractor for labor and materials. (Actual cost may vary depending on the specifics of your project.)
- I have friends in other places saying the cost to connect for us is very high. Why is that?
  - A major component called a Grinder Pump Station is required in this system because it is a pressurized or force main system. All wastewater at each individual property must be pulverized and pressurized into a 2" pipe. Grinding up solids into a fine slurry is critical to protect all other users and infrastructure downstream.
  - The cost of the Grinder Pump Station is about half of the total cost of a typical connection in this district.
- I paid the significant cost to install a Grinder Pump Station. Who maintains it?
  - The district pays to maintain all of the Grinder Pump Stations because they are a critical protection for all other users and infrastructure downstream. That cost - and all expenses of the district - is "baked into" or included in the regular sewer billing.
- What if my neighbor has a Grinder Pump Station ("Pit") already? Can I connect to that?
  - Yes, ONLY if your home was originally designed to connect to that Grinder Pump Station. The district can help determine that during your connection process.
  - All future, new connections to the system should have their own, individual, dedicated Grinder Pump Station.
  - Shared Grinder Pumps Stations save the district cost to maintain the grinder pumps. However, they often cause problems due to a lack of ownership and a lack of clear responsibility for calling maintenance when problems arise. It is critical for neighbors to communicate and work together well to maintain the pumps properly, calling in maintenance when alarms sound or issues arise. It's problematic when a neighbor is causing damage to the pump due to improper uses (such as flushing wipes), easily blaming the other neighbor or trying to escape responsibility.
- What if I need financial assistance?
  - Financing available, call (260) 227-7572 or visit [bcs-management.com/connectionfinancing/](https://bcs-management.com/connectionfinancing/) to learn more.
  - USDA Rural Redevelopment, Crawfordsville Office, 765-362-0405 EXT #4
  - Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority (IHCDA) Healthy Homes
  - Great Lakes Community Action Partnership, 800-775-9767
  - INCAA Indiana Community Action Association (Area Five), 800-654-9421