



**Baltimore County**  
**Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability**  
Ground Water Management Section  
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## **Pool Permit Guidance**

**(Effective January 1, 2021)**

All permits to install in-ground or above ground pools for properties in Baltimore County on private well and/or septic systems must be approved by the Groundwater Management Section (GWM). The Groundwater Management Section reviews these permits to ensure that the proposed pool and any related accessory structures (i.e., fencing, pool house, filters and pumps) or associated landscaping does not infringe on the existing septic system, the sewage disposal area (aka sewage reserve area), or well water supply, and is in conformance with state regulations.

This guidance document is intended to assist homeowners and contractors with the best practices for designing and preparing a pool permit application for GWM. Please be advised, that following these guidelines does not guarantee approval by GWM. Further, these guidelines do not factor in regulations, requirements or other restrictions that may pertain to a permit from other County agencies (i.e., zoning setbacks, forest buffer easements, stormwater management, etc).

### **Step 1: Request Well and Septic Records**

Well and septic records may be obtained by filling out and submitting an online request:

<https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/departments/environment/groundwatermgt/index.html>

Records will generally be sent electronically within 24 hours. In some cases, we have very good records with scaled drawings that show all the required information, and in some cases, we have little or no information. Regardless, it is incumbent on the property owner and the contractor to provide the documentation necessary for GWM to complete the permit review.

### **Step 2: Develop a Conceptual Plan**

Before planning the location and size of your pool, it is important to understand the potential restrictions and requirements:

- State regulation do not allow for pools, utilities or other structures to be located in the sewage disposal area.
- A sewage disposal area of 10,000 ft<sup>2</sup> must be maintained for lots created after 1985. A sewage disposal area with suitable soils that allows for enough room for one installation and one repair must be maintained for lots created prior to 1985.

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- GWM generally requires that buildings, and pools (as measured from the water's edge) maintain at least 20 feet from septic system components (i.e., septic tanks, seepage pits, and absorption trenches), and the sewage disposal area. Pool decking, and patios must maintain a least 10 feet from septic system components and SDAs. Grading may not occur over an established SDA or repair area, or impact an existing OSDS component. Any proposed improvement should not impede access to OSDS components for maintenance purposes.
- For properties where a sewage disposal area has not been established or where the sewage disposal area will be encroached upon, a septic system inspection by a sewage disposal contractor and percolation testing may be required in order to process your permit application.
- Pool water discharge may not be directed over the sewage disposal area.
- Well heads that are completed above grade must be maintained as such—they may not be buried or terminated in a pit or vault.

If you need assistance with developing a plan or help determining if your property can support a pool, you may submit a GWM Services Request via our website (see link above) and select “Consultation.”

Should you need a septic system inspection or a perc test, a list of sewage disposal contractors can be found here:

<https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/departments/environment/groundwatermgmt/contractors.html>

Forms used for septic system inspections (“OSDS Inspection Form”) can be found here:

<https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/departments/environment/groundwatermgmt/forms.html>

Before ordering a septic system inspection, make sure that the contractor doing the inspection understands that it is to obtain approval from Baltimore County GWM. The inspection must include locating and assessing the functionality of all septic system components. The location of the septic system components must be included on the scaled site plan that will be submitted with the pool permit application.

Note: If you are proposing a pool house in addition to the pool, a separate permit will be required for the building. However, it is important to include the pool house (or future pool house) on the site plan especially if plumbing fixtures will be installed. Depending on the location of the pool house relative to the existing septic system, a separate septic system or pump chamber may be required.

### Step 3: Create a Scaled Site Plan

Depending on the type and quality of records available, site plans from GWM records may be suitable base maps for using in your pool permit application. However, not all plans in our files will be acceptable. The following are some general guidelines for plan requirements:

- Site plans and figures must be original prints from AutoCAD or similar computer-aided drafting software. Hand drawn figures and notes will generally not be accepted as they do not reproduce well, are often difficult to read, and rarely have the level of detail and accuracy that is needed;

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- Site plans must be scaled drawings (e.g., 1":20', 1":30', 1":40' or 1":50") with a minimum 0.5" border;
- Site plans should include:
  - A Title Block with the owner name, property address, date and map scale;
  - Property boundaries within 100 ft. of the proposed pool (for large properties, it may be necessary to show the entire property at one scale with an enlarged area for the proposed pool);
  - Topography with a contour interval of 5 ft. across the property. Areas to be graded must be clearly shown with existing and proposed topography.
  - Streams, springs, floodplains and water bodies on the property;
  - Existing structures on the property (dwelling, garage, sheds etc.)
  - Existing stormwater management facilities;
  - Existing wells on the property;
  - Existing driveways, decks, patios, etc.
  - The existing septic system components and approved sewage disposal area including completed percolation test holes with the corresponding hole ID (this information can generally be found in the GWM records).
  - The proposed pool and associated decking, fencing, and accessory structures

### **Step 4: Submit a Permit Application and Site Plan**

If all of the above guidelines are followed, the review and processing of the pool permit will generally be faster and approval is more likely. If pool applications are submitted without adequate site plans or other required information, the permit will be placed on hold until all of the requirements are met. Please plan accordingly.