



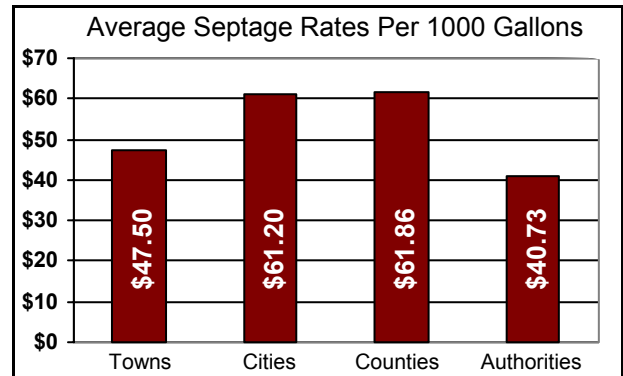
Determining Septage Rates

Virginia WWTP Facilities Respond to Survey

Late last year, a wastewater professional posed the question "What is the average septage rate charged by facilities in Virginia and how is that fee determined?" Draper Aden Associates quickly put together a fax survey and sent it to wastewater treatment facilities across the state. This article reflects the results of that survey. For the purposes of the survey and the following results, septage is defined as: any sewage that is "batch hauled" from a holding or storage or treatment vessel.

In December 2004, a fax survey was sent out seeking information concerning septage rates. Of the 172 recipients, 41% or 71 responded to the survey. Of those that responded, 42% or 30 localities indicated they accepted septage at a wastewater treatment plant within their jurisdiction. The average rate charged was \$49.35 per 1000 gallons of septage accepted. The highest fee was \$125 per 1000 gallons while the lowest rate was set at \$18 per 1000 gallons.

The higher rates tend to be charged by cities and counties. Of those that responded, the average fee set by a county was \$68 for 1000 gallons, while cities charged an average of \$61.20 for the same amount. Towns came in third highest at \$47.50 per 1000 gallons and authorities charged the lowest at an average of \$40.73.

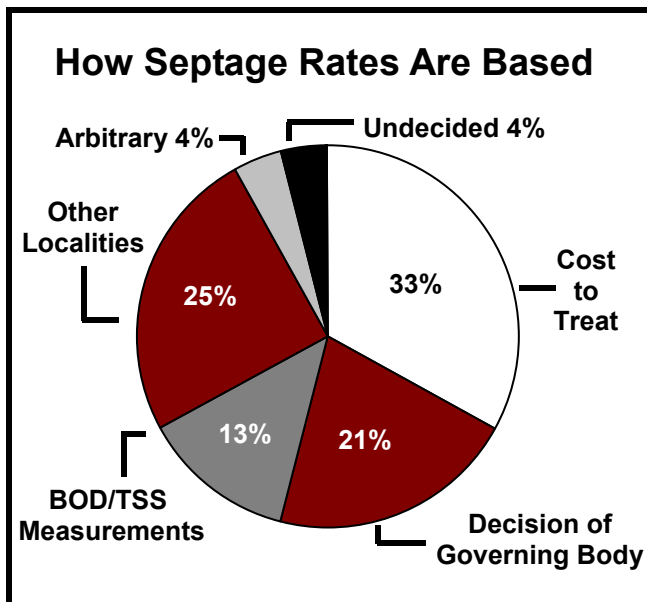


A variety of answers were given to the question of how the base rate was determined. Of the 24 respondents that answered that question, 33% (8) indicated it was based on the cost of treatment. Twenty-five percent (25%) or 6 facilities based their fees upon rates charged by neighboring communities, while another 21% indicated the fee charged was determined by a governing body. Three respondents or 13% based their rates on standard biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) or Total Suspended Solids (TSS) measurements.

"As can be seen from these results, most localities are attempting to set their rates based on treatment costs or how the septage will impact their ability to treat wastewater," said Larado Robinson, PE, Program Manager for Utilities Engineering at Draper Aden Associates. "Due to the higher concentrations of BOD and TSS, the more septage a facility accepts in relation to their treatment capacity, the more difficult it could be to meet their required discharge limits."

"Therefore, some facilities may charge higher rates to limit the amount of septage received at their facility while others may charge lower rates, as it may be viewed a service to the community," he said.

In response to the question, "Does your facility charge any fee other than the base rate," 27% (8 responses) answered yes. The majority of those indicated fees for hauling permits, ranging from a \$100 annual permit fee to \$25 for two years. One respondent indicated an extra fee could be charged based on the BOD or TSS measurement.



Continued on back... See Survey



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Twenty-four percent (24%) restricted the intake of septage to those within their municipal boundaries or by contractual agreement. Fifty-two percent (52%) of those receiving septage indicated they did not charge a higher fee for septage received from outside their municipal boundaries. Twenty-one percent (21%) or 6 respondents indicated a higher rate for septage received from outside municipal boundaries. Based on answers given the average rate charged for outside municipal boundaries is \$73.20.

The information in this article was provided by respondents to a survey and is presumed to be correct. Draper Aden Associates does not warrant the accuracy of the information presented.

As Virginia Goes, So Goes the Nation.....

Since Virginia's septage rates are so widely varied, it seemed like a good idea to check out facilities across the nation and see what others are charging. They, too vary widely. The localities in the following chart were simply chosen at random and rates taken from existing web sites for a quick, unscientific comparison.

Facility	State	Rate per 1000 gal.	Extra Fees
Kent County WW Treatment Plant	PA	\$47.62	\$100 Annual Truck Permit
City of Manchester WW Treatment Facility	NH	\$70.00	\$10 Annual Truck Permit
City of Anacortes WW Treatment Facility	WA	\$100-\$120	None Listed
City of Wyoming WW Treatment Facility	MI	\$52.00	\$1,000 initial deposit
Rapid City Water Reclamation Facility	SD	\$24.00	\$8 per 1000 gal. over first 1000 gal.
Helena WW Treatment Plant	MT	\$35.04	None Listed
Elko Water & Sewer	NV	\$170.00	None Listed
Orange Water & Service Authority	NC	\$73.00	Price determined by BOD/TSS
City of Prescott	AZ	\$100.00	None Listed
City of Coeur d'Alene	ID	\$200.00	Any necessary pretreatment costs
Town of Montague	MA	\$70.00	\$75 Outside of Boundaries

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