

The Anchorage Borough requires, each time a home is transferred to a new owner, the seller to complete a full inspection of the well and septic systems. This is referred to as the COSA (Certificate of On-Site Systems Approval) Process. Borough standards meet or exceed national standards for the protection of all parties involved. The following is an accounting of this process by a past client.

(Full Article)

COSA (Certificate of On-Site Systems Approval) Process:

There are a number of detailed sources of information on COSA requirements. Garness Engineering Group Ltd. Is one such contractor that has detailed info on their web site (www.garnessengineering.com). In addition, the MOA also has detailed info on their web site (www.muni.org/onsite). For those who wish to get more detailed information, I would recommend these two sites. There may be other engineering firms also that provide services.

If one looks at a well source for water at a residence: In all likelihood if the residence has not been sold in the last ten or so years, the seller will need to have the head for the well replaced. The MOA has required that all wells presently have a head with a rubber seal so that nothing can drain into the well irrespective of how high out of the ground the well casing protrudes. I had Sullivan Water Wells (PO Box 670269, Chugiak, AK 99567 Tel 688-2759) replace my well head. It was a fairly simple process and took about an hour to complete the process. The charges were approximately \$220 in 2013.

The actual testing of both the Well and the Septic System was completed in mid-November 2013. The test included pumping of the well to provide 150 gallons per bedroom or in my case 750 gallons (5 bedrooms). As I recall they completed the pumping over about a four hour period but I believe the regulations allow for the pumping to be completed over a 24 hour period and still have the well responding. Given that the well did not have any challenge, they were able to pump it in essentially 4 hours. They pumped the water into my septic system on the other side of the tank (to insure that they did not push any solids into the septic field). The technician checked the site tube sometime in the afternoon and found that there was still some minor water in the tube but not a lot; he came back early the next morning and checked and there was no water at all at the end of the site tube. It is my understanding that the test is over a 24 hour period as such with the lack of any water after 24 hours; the septic system was in very good shape.

If need be they would have brought out a tank to stress test the septic system if the well had not performed as good as it did. Likely there would have been an additional charge for it. Just the stress testing of the Septic System and the Water Well cost \$950.

Garness Engineering also had to take a water sample and have it tested thru a lab in town per MOA regulations. The water test by the laboratory costs \$250 and Garness's fee for collecting and submitting it to MOA is another \$150 so total for the Water Sample Testing and submission is another \$400. Note that the water sample once it is submitted to MOA is only valid for 90 days, at which time one has to recollect and send back in to the MOA for re-certification of the COSA. The Engineering firm could actually hold the sample test for almost 90 days (i.e. up to 89) and then submit it to MOA and it would then be valid for another 90 days.. thus allowing the homeowner to cover close to 180 days.

In my case, the fee for the COSA completed by the MOA was \$526, in addition there was a need for a Lot Line Wavier since my septic system was put in back in 1985 and was grandfathered in; I believe today the end of the laterals need to be ten feet off the lot line and I think the technician estimated that I was something like 5 or so feet off the lot line/ fence in the back yard. The wavier required an additional MOA fee of \$215 along with another \$125 for the

technician to put all the paperwork together and submit it to the MOA. All totaled up the actual submission to the MOA including the MOA Fees was another \$866. The MOA then issued my COSA with a initial date of sometime in November. The COSA testing of the Water Well and the Septic System is good for two years from the date of the actual testing i.e. November 2013. So it is good until November of 2015. That said the water sample has to be retested by the lab approximately every 90 days +/- to keep the COSA fully current.

So in my case, my Water sample was good until sometime in I think February 2014. At which time I had Garness pull another sample and had it tested but I had them hold on to it in order to stretch out the time frame it would be good for. Again, I had to pay Garness another \$400 (\$250 for the lab test & \$150 for their service) to cover the costs of testing and handling the sample. As you recall the sample was going to become invalid in the spring along with the fact that we had another offer come in during the early spring. As such I had Garness submit the water test to the MOA and they reissued the COSA as current. Note the MOA does not charge anything for the re-issuance of the COSA... it is just the cost incurred to do the water sample testing at the lab and Garness's fee to handle it. I think that got us to sometime in mid June.

Given that the first offer fell thru and we got a second offer in June 2014, I had Garness pull another sample that was submitted to the MOA sometime in July which extended the currency of the COSA to early October. Again it was another \$400.

Recently, we have had another offer on the house. As such, I have just(10-03-14) had Garness pull another water sample and are having them run it thru the Lab and then submit it to the MOA so that the COSA will be current when we close. It normally takes about two weeks for the lab to process the sample (depending upon work load) and then Garness submits it to the MOA for issuance of the COSA again. My best guess is that the sample results will be done by the 17th of October with submission shortly thereafter to the MOA. The MOA probably will issue the current COSA as of the 22nd +/- is my best guess. Again, my costs \$400.

So in summary:

Well Head replacement	\$220
Initial stress test of the Water Well & Septic:	\$950
The submission of Test to the MOA including all fees etc	\$866
The Initial Water Sample Lab Test & Submission:	\$400
The Second Water Sample Lab Test & Submission:	\$400
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The Third Water Sample Lab Test & Submission:	\$400
The Fourth Water Sample Lab Test & Submission:	\$400

Total to date for COSA and water testing: \$3,636

Dollar amounts represented here are subject to change. This does not include any other costs such as the updating the plat nor the inspection for the hot water heaters and furnaces.

Provided By:

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Note: If this article generates additional questions or a need for additional information, the following button will allow you to ask your question(s), request additional information or make comments. It is not my intent to bug you with unwanted phone calls, emails, or text messages! It is my intent to allow you to benefit from my 35+ years real estate activity and to give you a buying experience beyond your expectations!

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