

## Fwd: Septic systems surrounding Portage Lake

From: David Meister (avo49675@yahoo.com)  
To: clerk@onekamatwp.org  
Date: Friday, March 10, 2023 at 02:46 PM EST

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Jeffrey Dontz <jeffdontz@googlemail.com>  
**Date:** March 9, 2023 at 1:03:12 PM EST  
**To:** Michael Kramer <mkramer@dhd10.org>  
**Cc:** Kevin Hughes <khughes@dhd10.org>, Matt Fournier <mfournier@dhd10.org>, avo49675@yahoo.com  
**Subject: Re: Septic systems surrounding Portage Lake**

I was asked a question by Supervisor Meister and mentioned it to Kevin at the last D-10 meeting. I'm available if needed, hopefully you and David can discuss his concerns.

All the best,  
Jeff

On Thu, Mar 9, 2023 at 12:29 PM Michael Kramer <mkramer@dhd10.org> wrote:

Mr. Meister/Mr. Dontz,

Kevin Hughes has brought to my attention that you have concerns surrounding the state of septic systems around Portage Lake. I have attached a letter discussing the issue at hand. Please let me know of any further questions or concerns that you may have.

Regards,

Michael Kramer

DHD #10 EH Director



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# District Health Department #10

*Healthy People, Healthy Communities*

Wexford County Office ◦ 521 Cobb Street ◦ Cadillac, MI, 49601 ◦ tel. 231-775-9942 ◦ ehwexfordcounty@dhd10.org

Mr. Meister,

It has been brought to our attention that you have concerns about the residential septic systems surrounding the vicinity of Portage Lake; especially the state of those systems during a high water and/or flood event which may cause flood waters to remain exposed onto the septic systems of these properties. Additionally, that you feel strongly that DHD#10 should evaluate all the residential properties surrounding Portage Lake during high water/flood events.

A requirement of the state is to conduct an evaluation on all septic (residential and non-residential) systems when they have failed. Per our definition in our Sanitary Code (SC) Section 5.2.03 a septic system has failed when the effluent:

- a) Is exposed to, or drains onto the surface of the ground
- b) Drains into surface water
- c) Endangers a public or private water supply Or
- d) Backs up into the residence

A high-water event due to elevations of lake level rise does not constitute the definition of a "failed septic system" per our Sanitary Code. In addition, there are numerous properties on Portage Lake; we do not have the means or manpower to evaluate every residential septic system on Portage Lake during flood waters. We do evaluate the state of septic systems in our mortgage evaluations (\$275.00) for a full evaluation. In order to evaluate a system properly access to the system is necessary. This means the system would have to be partially dug up. At this point it's a capacity issue; however we are welcome to sit down with you and discuss further options available at the township level. The township may adopt certain ordinances that are more restrictive than our SC. Understand that if DHD #10 evaluated these systems, there is a fee involved at it would be best if the request came from Onekama Township. Standing water albeit temporary does not constitute the definition of a failed septic system and we do not have the means or availability to evaluate such systems every time there is standing water due to water rise from the lake.

Sincerely,

*Michael Kramer*

Michael Kramer  
EH Director, MPH, REHS  
DHD #10

Cc Jeff Dantz  
Kevin Hughes, Health Officer  
Matt Fournier, Onsite Supervisor