

Information to Assist Property Owners in Connecting to the Expanded Tuscarora Township Municipal Sewer System

Updated 11/3/2025

Performance Engineers Inc. (PEI) has been working with Tuscarora Township on their projects to expand the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant and extend sewer mains into numerous neighborhoods in Indian River. In the fall of 2025 the new expanded section of the waste water treatment plant came on line and the Township began allowing homeowners, in areas where the new sewer mains are ready, to connect to the system. The following information is intended to assist homeowners in understanding what their responsibilities are and determining the steps they need to take to have their homes connected to the system.

Homeowner Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the homeowner to connect their house to the connection point that has been provided at the property line. It is also the responsibility of the homeowner to decommission their existing septic system which usually involves having the tank(s) pumped out and filled with sand. Drain fields are usually left in place. Both the connection to the municipal system and the decommissioning of the existing system are usually accomplished by hiring a licensed contractor; however, homeowners may request to perform some or all of the work themselves when submitting their permit application to Cheboygan County. A list of contractors who have expressed interest in connecting homes to the system in Indian River is included in this packet. Contractors should be registered with both Cheboygan County and District Health Department #4. The current lists of contractors registered with each of these agencies are also provided in this packet; however, the Cheboygan County lists were last updated in April 2024 so you should check with your contractor to make sure they have registered.

Most of the homes will be connecting to a gravity sewer main. Some homes will be connected to a low-pressure sewer main which means they will have a grinder pump installed as part of the connection process. The Township's contractor will be installing a curb stop (connection point) at the property line and also installing the grinder pump at a location selected by the homeowner (usually in the yard near where your existing waste pipe exits the house). It will be the responsibility of the homeowner to have a sewer pipe installed from the curb stop at the property line and connecting it to the grinder pump and connecting the grinder pump to the existing waste pipe exiting the house. It will also be the responsibility of the homeowner to have an electrician install electrical service and connect it to the grinder pump.

Some of the homes connecting to the gravity sewer main may need to have an ejector pump installed. This will be the case if there is not enough vertical difference between where the waste pipe exits the house and the elevation of the 4-inch lateral sewer pipe the Township's contractor left at the property line. The Township intends to have a contractor provide and install the ejector pump in the same manner as the homes receiving grinder pumps, but PEI is still working with them to identify a funding source.

It will still be the responsibility of the homeowner to have a sewer line installed from the property line to the ejector pump and from the ejector pump to the waste pipe exiting the house. It will also be the responsibility of the homeowner to have an electrician install electrical service and connect it to the ejector pump.

Finding the Connection Point

The Township's contractors installing the gravity sewer main will have left a 4-inch lateral sewer pipe capped off at approximately your property line about 5 feet below ground level. (In a few cases of larger structures it will be a 6-inch lateral). It should be marked by a 2x4 painted green sticking about a foot out of the ground. The 2x4 extends all the way down to the capped end of the pipe. There should also be a short section of steel rod driven into the ground next to the 2x4 to help locate the spot with a metal detector in case the 2x4 was broken off or cut off. In some cases, where the 2x4 is in or adjacent to a driveway or walkway, the Township's contractor may have cut it off flush with the ground and put a lathe stake several feet out of the way with a measurement and arrow pointing to the spot.

The Township's contractors installing the low-pressure system will have left a curb stop valve at your property line approximately 5 feet below ground. A rod connects the valve to a small cast iron box at the surface. There should be a lathe stake sticking several feet out of the ground adjacent to the cover with your address written on it.

A PEI inspector also will have captured the electronic position of the end of your pipe or curb stop so if you have any problems locating your connection point, please contact us at 231-547-2121.

Is My Home on the Gravity System or Low-Pressure System

The majority of the homes will be connected to a gravity sewer main. If they dug up the whole street in front of your house then you are most likely going to be on the gravity system. We are providing a list to the Township which will indicate whether a house is on the gravity system or the low-pressure system. It will also indicate if a house on the gravity system may need an ejector pump.

Required Applications & Permits

Tuscarora Township

The first step will be to complete and submit a "Township of Tuscarora Application for Sewer Connection and/or Change of Use". A copy of the application is included in this packet. The application can also be found at the Tuscarora Township website at the link below:

<https://www.tuscaroratownship.com/DocumentCenter/View/917/Application-for-Sewer-Connection>

PEI will be working with the Township to maintain a list of properties which will include information such as whether the sewer main serving the property is in service yet and whether the property will be served by a gravity sewer main, gravity sewer with an ejector pump or low-pressure force main with a grinder pump.

Cheboygan County

The second step will be to complete and submit a Cheboygan County Department of Building Safety Plumbing Permit Application. The plumbing/excavating contractor you hire will likely complete and submit this application for you. A copy of the permit application is included in this packet. The application can also be found at the Cheboygan County website at the link below:

<https://www.cheboygancounty.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/DBS-plumbing-application25.pdf>

If your connection to the sewer system will include a grinder pump or ejector pump you will also need to complete and submit a Cheboygan County Department of Building Safety Electrical Permit Application. The electrical contractor you hire will likely complete and submit this application for you. A copy of the permit application is included in this packet. The application can also be found at the Cheboygan County website at the link below:

<https://www.cheboygancounty.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/DBS-electrical-application25.pdf>

Cheboygan County also requires homes within 500 feet of a lake or stream to obtain a soil erosion and sedimentation control permit. An exemption may be granted if the area of disturbed earth will be less than 225 square feet. In order request an exemption you must submit a signed affidavit stating that the disturbed earth will be less than 225 square feet and not contribute sediment to a lake or stream. The permit application can be found on the Cheboygan County website at the link below:

<https://www.cheboygancounty.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/SESC-Application-Rev-01.01.25.pdf>

The affidavit form for requesting an exemption can be found on the Cheboygan County website at the link below:

<https://www.cheboygancounty.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/fs83-1584381613-25671.pdf>

Septic Replacement Loan Program

The Septic Replacement Loan Program (SRLP), created in partnership with the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), provides low-interest financing to Michigan homeowners for the replacement of failing or near-failing septic systems and connections to municipal sewer. EGLE contracted Michigan Saves to develop and manage the program. Information on this program is included in this packet and can also be found online at the Michigan Saves website at the link below:

<https://michigansaves.org/septic/>

Homeowners using this program have to use a contractor authorized by Michigan Saves. Currently the only contractor on the list of contractors who has expressed interest in performing connections Indian River that is also registered to be an authorized contractor for performing connections to municipal sewers with Michigan Saves is Matts Underground. PEI has forwarded the information on how to register to all the contractors who have expressed interest in performing connections in Indian River.