



County of San Diego

Department of Environmental Health and Quality Land and Water Quality Division

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Emergency TOPs for Fire-Damaged Homes For Sites Served by Onsite Wastewater Disposal Systems

The County of San Diego Planning Development Services, Building Division (PDS) will issue Emergency Temporary Occupancy Permits (ETOP) for properties with dwellings made uninhabitable by recent wildfires. Persons that qualify for this permit will be property owners of existing, legal dwellings that sustained damage. The ETOP expires 12 months after the date of issuance and cannot be issued to replace an illegal trailer or illegal dwelling. During this time, the property owner is expected to obtain a building permit from PDS to reconstruct the dwelling.

The Department of Environmental Health and Quality (DEHQ) will facilitate the processing of ETOPs where appropriate. These temporary trailers/mobile homes/RV units must be connected to an approved onsite wastewater disposal system, public sewer or holding tank that is maintained as described below. The following are the acceptable options for sewage disposal for travel trailers, RV's or mobile homes:

1. Leak proof connection to the existing septic tank or public sewer, assuming that neither have been damaged by the fire or fire related activities (clearing, salvage, etc.) Installation of sewage ejector pumps or pump systems to transport effluent may require additional permits and inspections by PDS/ Building Division.
2. If the temporary dwelling unit cannot readily gain access to the existing onsite wastewater disposal system or public sewer, confining the wastewater at all times to a holding tank may be permitted. Any holding tank must be dumped/pumped as needed (at an approved dump station or by a DEHQ-permitted Septic Pumper to prevent wastewater from discharging to the ground surface. Please note that DEHQ will cite the discharge of sewage effluent on the ground in accordance with San Diego County Section 68.311. Evidence of improper wastewater disposal may result in the cancellation of the ETOP by PDS.

Existing drinking water supply wells should be evaluated by a licensed contractor and serviced prior to use in the temporary unit. This is especially important in areas impacted by power outages.

Land Use Duty Specialists are available by phone at (858) 565-5173 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.