

**RCW 36.94.020 Purpose—Powers.** The construction, operation, and maintenance of a system of sewerage and/or water is a county purpose. Subject to the provisions of this chapter, every county has the power, individually or in conjunction with another county or counties to adopt, provide for, accept, establish, condemn, purchase, construct, add to, operate, and maintain a system or systems of sanitary and storm sewers, including outfalls, interceptors, plans, and facilities and services necessary for sewerage treatment and disposal, and/or system or systems of water supply within all or a portion of the county. However, counties shall not have power to condemn sewerage and/or water systems of any municipal corporation or private utility.

Such county or counties shall have the authority to control, regulate, operate, and manage such system or systems and to provide funds therefor by general obligation bonds, revenue bonds, local improvement district bonds, utility local improvement district or local improvement district assessments, and in any other lawful fiscal manner. Rates or charges for on-site inspection and maintenance services may not be imposed under this chapter on the development, construction, or reconstruction of property.

Under this chapter, after July 1, 1998, any requirements for pumping the septic tank of an on-site sewage system should be based, among other things, on actual measurement of accumulation of sludge and scum by a trained inspector, trained owner's agent, or trained owner. Training must occur in a program approved by the state board of health or by a local health officer.

Before adopting on-site inspection and maintenance utility services, or incorporating residences into an on-site inspection and maintenance or sewer utility under this chapter, notification must be provided, prior to the applicable public hearing, to all residences within the proposed service area that have on-site systems permitted by the local health officer. The notice must clearly state that the residence is within the proposed service area and must provide information on estimated rates or charges that may be imposed for the service.

A county shall not provide on-site sewage system inspection, pumping services, or other maintenance or repair services under this section using county employees unless the on-site system is connected by a publicly owned collection system to the county's sewerage system, and the on-site system represents the first step in the sewage disposal process. Nothing in this section shall affect the authority of a state or local health officer to carry out their responsibilities under any other applicable law.

A county may, as part of a system of sewerage established under this chapter, provide for, finance, and operate any of the facilities and services and may exercise the powers expressly authorized for county stormwater, flood control, pollution prevention, and drainage services and activities under chapters 36.89, 86.12, 86.13, and 86.15 RCW. A county also may provide for, finance, and operate the facilities and services and may exercise any of the powers authorized for aquifer protection areas under chapter 36.36 RCW; for lake or beach management districts under chapter 36.61 RCW; for diking districts, and diking, drainage, and sewerage improvement districts under chapters 85.05, 85.08, 85.15, 85.16, and 85.18 RCW; and for shellfish protection districts under chapter 90.72 RCW. However, if a county by reference to any of those statutes assumes as part of its system of sewerage any powers granted to such areas or districts and

not otherwise available to a county under this chapter, then (1) the procedures and restrictions applicable to those areas or districts apply to the county's exercise of those powers, and (2) the county may not simultaneously impose rates and charges under this chapter and under the statutes authorizing such areas or districts for substantially the same facilities and services, but must instead impose uniform rates and charges consistent with RCW 36.94.140. By agreement with such an area or district that is not part of a county's system of sewerage, a county may operate that area's or district's services or facilities, but a county may not dissolve any existing area or district except in accordance with any applicable provisions of the statute under which that area or district was created. [2008 c 301 § 25; 1997 c 447 § 11; 1981 c 313 § 1; 1967 c 72 § 2.]

**Finding—Purpose—1997 c 447:** See note following RCW 70.05.074.

**Severability—1981 c 313:** "If any provision of this act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the remainder of the act or the application of the provision to other persons or circumstances is not affected." [1981 c 313 § 23.]