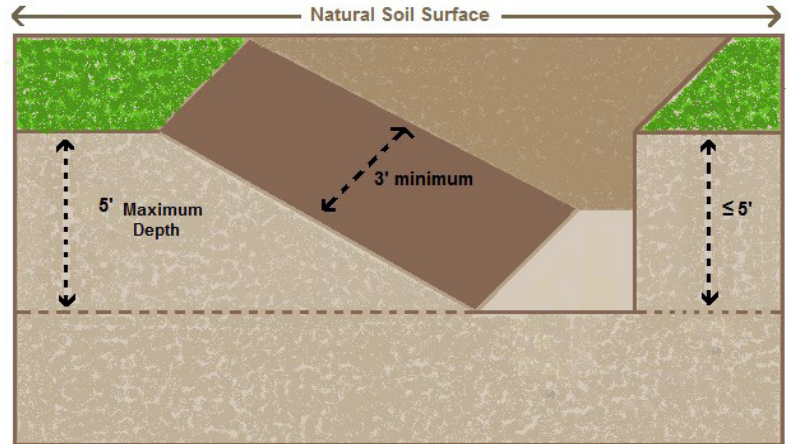


# Guidelines for Test Pit Construction for Onsite Wastewater System Soil Evaluation

## Onsite Wastewater Program



Test pits are required by the Department if a property is located above the [S.C. Fall Line](#), and may be requested by the Department in cases where the evaluator encounters an obstruction during initial evaluation. This test pit diagram meets the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) safety requirements. Local SCDES staff may have more specific guidance for your area depending on local soil classification.



Above diagram shows the side view of a test pit.

### If test pits are deemed unsafe, SCDES staff may not be able to complete an evaluation.

- Call 811 to locate underground utilities prior to digging.
- All test pits must be evaluated for stability by a SCDES employee that has been trained to recognize trenching hazards; test pits will not be entered by SCDES staff if the pit is deemed unstable.
- SCDES evaluators will not enter test pits that are deeper than 5 feet.
- Every test pit must have a ramp for entry and exit with a 34 degree slope as required by OSHA standards for Type C soils.
- All spoils (excavated soil) must be placed at least 3 feet from the edge of the test pit.
- All equipment within 20 feet of the test pit that produces vibrations and/or fumes must be turned off to significantly reduce the risk of hazardous atmospheric conditions and collapse. If odor is present or fissures develop in the sidewall, SCDES staff will stop the evaluation and exit the pit.
- It is recommended that test pits be filled immediately after being evaluated. Test pits dug prior to evaluation must be properly barricaded per OSHA standards ([www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)).

Please see the [Onsite Wastewater Website](#) for additional information or contact your local SCDES office with any questions.

Material within this informational sheet was obtained from OSHA's trenching and excavation safety standards and SCDES's Safety Director.