



The United States Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services conducted a civil rights investigation of the sanitation programs of the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH). On May 4, 2023, ADPH made a legal agreement with the United States to take immediate actions on the raw sewage exposure issues in Lowndes County.

ADPH's voluntary agreement with the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services will protect Black and low-income county residents of Lowndes County who:

- Cannot pay to put in a functioning septic system;
- Cannot afford to fix one;
- Are not on a municipal sanitation system (sewer);
- Are concerned:
 - They will be fined by a judge or face jail time
 - They will lose their property
 - Their personal information will be shared

This legal agreement is between ADPH and the United States and only covers septic tank systems – not municipal sewer. ADPH wants to help Lowndes County residents improve their quality of life by stopping raw sewage from remaining on the ground outside homes or backing up into homes. To accomplish this goal the agreement does several things for residents who do not have the means to install/repair an ADPH-approved septic system:

1. ADPH will no longer report Lowndes County residents to the police for not having a working septic tank system or for straightpiping if they:
 - a. provide information to ADPH about their method of wastewater disposal, and/or
 - b. apply under any program run by ADPH to receive an onsite septic/wastewater system approved by ADPH and designed to function with the specific soil at the property and keep sewage discharge to their property and not drain it onto other people's property.
2. Residents will not be fined by a judge or face jail time because they straightpipe or rely on septic systems that do not work properly. This also means that residents will not lose their property because they cannot afford to install a septic system that works properly.

ADPH asks Lowndes County residents with straight pipes or with septic tanks that do not work properly to visit the website below or contact (334) 206-5373 to get information about getting a septic system designed, installed, or repaired so that it works with your property's soil. ADPH will not use your personal information to report you for straightpiping or having a septic system that does not work.

**Go to alabamapublichealth.gov/environmental/septic-system-program.html
or call (334) 206-5373 to learn more.**