

Licensing & Registration Requirements

Septic and Sewer Installers in Indiana

Always verify current requirements with the relevant authority before relying on this summary.

Indiana does not issue a single statewide license for septic and sewer installation. Requirements depend on the type of work — onsite sewage (septic) systems, connections to municipal sanitary sewers, and interior plumbing each fall under a different authority. Septic work is governed by state rule but administered locally, sewer connections are typically governed by the city or utility, and plumbing is the one trade with full statewide licensing.

At a Glance

Type of Work	Governing Authority	Credential Needed
Residential septic (onsite sewage)	Indiana Dept. of Health rule 410 IAC 6-8.3, administered by county health departments	County installer registration/permit; often IOWPA certificate
Commercial septic (onsite sewage)	Indiana Dept. of Health rule 410 IAC 6-10.1 / IDEM, plus county	Plan review by state; county registration
Sewer line / municipal connection	City building dept. or local utility	Local sewer/drain contractor registration or licensed plumber
Interior plumbing & site connections	Indiana Plumbing Commission (IPLA)	Journeyman Plumber or Plumbing Contractor license

1. Septic / Onsite Sewage Systems

Indiana regulates onsite sewage systems (the state's term for septic systems) at two levels. The Indiana Department of Health sets statewide standards through Indiana Administrative Code 410 IAC 6-8.3, the residential rule; commercial systems fall under 410 IAC 6-10.1. County health departments serve as the local enforcement authority — they process permits, conduct inspections, and decide what an installer must do to work in that county.

Because enforcement is local, there is no single state-issued septic installer license. In practice, installers must register or hold an installer permit with each county health department where they work. County requirements commonly include some combination of the following:

- A completed installer or contractor registration application
- A registration fee (varies widely by county)
- A surety bond in some counties
- Passing a county exam, the IOWPA exam, or holding an IOWPA certificate
- Annual or periodic renewal

The IOWPA Certificate

The Indiana Onsite Wastewater Professionals Association (IOWPA) is a nonprofit that runs the installer and inspector certificate programs used across the state. Its certificates are recognized by more than half of Indiana's counties — and some counties (for example, Marion and Hendricks) require the IOWPA installer certificate specifically. The certificate is held by an individual, is not transferable, and in counties that recognize it, the certificate holder must be physically onsite during installation.

IOWPA offers installer certification for three system categories:

- A — Subsurface Trench Gravity Feed Systems (required for the initial certificate)
- B — Subsurface Trench Flood Dosed Systems (optional)
- C — Pressure Distribution and Elevated Sand Mounds (optional)

Certificates must be renewed every three years and require a minimum of 20 hours of continuing education over that period. Renewal runs roughly \$25 for members and \$100 for nonmembers per certificate. IOWPA can be reached at 2201 E 46th St., Ste. 126, Indianapolis, IN 46205, **(317) 965-1859**, info@iowpa.org.

Typical Permit Process for a System

Even once an installer is registered, each individual job requires a permit obtained from the county health department before construction begins. The general sequence is:

1. A soil evaluation by a registered soil scientist to determine system feasibility, location, and design.
2. Submission of a permit application and scaled system drawing to the county (or state, depending on purview), with the applicable fee — typically \$200–\$600 for a residential system.
3. Installation by a registered/permitted installer.
4. Inspection and approval before the system is covered and placed in service.

How County Requirements Vary — Examples

County	Installer Requirement (illustrative)
Marion (Indianapolis)	Installers must be certified by IOWPA.
Hendricks	IOWPA installer certificate required.
St. Joseph	Contractor registration under County Code 51: application + \$375 fee + surety bond; renews annually by Jan 31. Separate individual installer/inspector registration.
Vanderburgh	Must register with the county to install/repair residential or commercial systems; requires application, fee, and passing a county-approved exam or holding an IOWPA certificate.
Clark	Must pass a written county exam (based on 410 IAC 6-8.3) and pay applicable fees before installing.
Dubois	Installer must hold an installer's permit issued by the county health department.
Floyd	Licensing by either the county exam or the IOWPA exam.

These examples illustrate the range only. Always confirm directly with the county where you intend to work — fees, bonds, exams, and renewal dates differ in every jurisdiction.

2. Sewer Lines & Municipal Connections

Connecting a building to a municipal sanitary sewer (tapping the main) is regulated at the city or municipal level rather than by a single statewide installer license. Requirements vary by jurisdiction but commonly include:

- Registration as a sewer/drain contractor with the city building department or sanitary district
- Use of a licensed plumber for the connection work
- A surety bond payable to the municipality or utility
- A connection/tap permit and inspection by the utility or building department

In addition, Indiana provides for state-level registration of certain trades adjacent to plumbing — including sewer and water contractors. Where the work crosses into the regulated plumbing scope (see Section 3), a state plumbing credential is required. Notably, the point where a structure's system ties into the site water supply or sewer is treated as licensed plumbing work under Indiana law.

Practical takeaway: Contact the building department or sanitary district for the specific city/town where the connection will occur. If the job involves drain/waste/vent piping or the site connection point, plan on a state plumbing license as well.

3. Plumbing License (Statewide)

Plumbing is the one Indiana construction trade with full statewide licensing. It is illegal to perform plumbing work in Indiana without a state-issued license. The Indiana Plumbing Commission, administered by the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency (IPLA), issues licenses under Indiana Code 25-28.5. Indiana follows the Indiana Plumbing Code (675 IAC 16).

There are three levels:

Level	Key Requirements
Apprentice	At least 17 years old; registered in a commission-approved apprenticeship program; complete the application and pay the annual application fee. No exam required.
Journeyman Plumber	At least 18; complete a four-year approved apprenticeship (minimum ~576 hours classroom + ~6,400 hours on-the-job, often cited up to 6,800 total), or hold an out-of-state license with four years' experience; pass the journeyman exam (administered via ICC).
Plumbing Contractor	Hold a journeyman credential plus additional journey-level experience (commonly cited as two more years), or show four years' trade/business experience; pass the contractor exam. A contractor license authorizes a business to contract for plumbing work and pull permits.

Licenses are renewed periodically (the PLA sends renewal notices ahead of expiration), and licensees must carry a copy of the license on the job. Indiana maintains limited reciprocity with

Ohio, Illinois, and Kentucky. Plumbing contractors must also carry the insurance coverage the state and localities require.

Local overlay: Some cities add registration on top of the state license. For example, the City of Indianapolis requires plumbing contractors to register their state license with the Department of Business and Neighborhood Services.

Indiana Plumbing Commission / IPLA — 402 W. Washington Street, Room W072, Indianapolis, IN 46204. Official portal: in.gov/pla/professions/plumbing/

Recommended Next Steps

1. Decide the scope of work: septic install, sewer connection, plumbing, or a combination.
2. For septic: contact the health department in each county you'll work in to confirm registration, bond, exam, and whether an IOWPA certificate is required or accepted.
3. Consider obtaining the IOWPA installer certificate — it is recognized by a majority of counties and may satisfy several at once.
4. For sewer connections: contact the city building department or sanitary district where the work occurs about contractor registration and tap permits.
5. For any regulated plumbing work: pursue the appropriate Indiana plumbing license through the Plumbing Commission / IPLA, and check whether the city requires local registration of that license.

Sources

- Indiana Onsite Wastewater Professionals Association (IOWPA) — iowpa.org (certificates, renewal, CEUs)
- Indiana Administrative Code 410 IAC 6-8.3 (residential) and 410 IAC 6-10.1 (commercial)
- County health departments: St. Joseph, Vanderburgh, Clark, Dubois, Marion, Elkhart, Greene, Randolph
- Indiana Plumbing Commission / Indiana Professional Licensing Agency — in.gov/pla/professions/plumbing/
- Indiana Code 25-28.5; Indiana Plumbing Code 675 IAC 16