



POWTS FACTSHEET

LICENSE REQUIREMENTS FOR POWTS ACTIVITIES

BUREAU OF FIELD SERVICES

4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison WI 53705
(608)266-2112
www.dsps.wi.gov

RESOURCES

Plumbing Law Brochure
<https://dsps.wi.gov/Documents/Programs/Plumbing/PlumbingLawsInWisconsin.pdf>

DSPS Professions List
<https://dsps.wi.gov/Pages/Professions/Default.aspx>

Plumbing License Violation
Forfeitures – [SPS 305.125](#)

[§145.11, Wis. Stats.](#)
[§145.12, Wis. Stats.](#)
[§145.14, Wis. Stats.](#)
[§145.19, Wis. Stats.](#)
[SPS 383.21\(1\)\(a\) and \(b\)](#)

[DSPS POWTS Website](#)

License Requirements
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SUMMARY

Wisconsin adopted a statewide plumbing code in 1914, recognizing early that safeguarding the public health and the waters of the state required plumbing to be safe and sanitary. ***Current law requires anyone installing any component of a Private Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (POWTS) to be properly licensed by DSPS.*** No portion of a POWTS may be installed by a homeowner. The [Plumbing Law Brochure](#) describes these statutes and codes and can be found by clicking on the link. This factsheet, however, will attempt to describe specific POWTS related situations where a license is needed.

WHAT ARE THE DSPS LICENSES RELATED TO POWTS IN WISCONSIN

Click on the license name to go to the agency page for that license

[Master Plumber \(MP\)](#) – The responsible plumber – can do any plumbing

[Master Plumber Restricted Service \(MPRS\)](#) – The responsible plumber – limited to POWTS, sewer extensions, water services, storm water use systems and reclaimed water systems located outside of the foundation of a building

[Journeyman Plumber \(JP\)](#) – works under the general supervision of the master plumber – can work alone on any plumbing – MP is still responsible

[Journeyman Plumber Restricted Service \(JPRS\)](#) – works under the general supervision of the MPRS – can work alone – MPRS is still responsible - limited to “service” plumbing installations like the MPRS

[Plumbing Apprentice](#) – works under the direct supervision of the MP or JP which means the MP or JP must be onsite

[Plumbing Learner Restricted Service](#) – works under the direct supervision of the MPRS or JPRS which means the MPRS or JPRS must be onsite – limited to “service” plumbing installations like the MPRS.

[Designer of Engineering Systems PSS](#) – may prepare plans and specifications, consult, investigate and evaluate in connection with private sewage systems. No repair or installation authority is granted.

[POWTS Inspector](#) – Inspects POWTS for the purpose of administering and enforcing SPS 381-387 as an authorized representative of the Department or local governmental unit. No repair or installation authority is granted.

[POWTS Maintainer](#) – this person may evaluate, monitor and maintain POWTS components for the purposes of providing management of a POWTS. No repair or installation authority is granted.

[Soil Tester](#) – this person performs soil evaluations for POWTS siting. No repair or installation authority is granted.

WHAT IS CONSIDERED PLUMBING IN THE POWTS WORLD?		
Activity	YES	NO
Staking out the POWTS * Needs general supervision by the responsible plumber		X
Cutting weeds, plowing and rough leveling for installation of a mound system * Needs general supervision by the responsible plumber		X
Installing any piping in the building sewer or POWTS	X	
Installing a sewage ejector pit and pump outside the basement wall	X	
Installing dispersal cell components (chambers, media)	X	
Final leveling of sand and stone in the soil absorption area	X	
Sealing the cover of a septic tank or manhole		X
Placement of an exterior treatment tank in the hole		X
Ensuring the septic tank is properly installed (i.e. elevation, orientation, location and watertight)	X	
Wiring the pump used in a dose tank		X
Installing a pump and setting the floats in a dose tank	X	
Covering piping after installation by plumber * Plumber is responsible to make sure all work is completed		X
Drilling holes in the effluent distribution piping	X	
Repair/replacement of baffles, manhole risers and manhole covers**	X	

** Pumpers licensed by WI DNR are able to replace/repair these components

If the activity is considered plumbing, a person **MUST BE** properly licensed.

ADVERTISING

No person may offer plumbing services or advertise as someone who can install plumbing unless they are a licensed master plumber or employ a licensed master plumber. Any printed advertisement shall include their master plumber license number. No journeyman plumber or registered learner shall contract for work, advertise or do anything which would lead others to believe him or her to be qualified as a master plumber in his or her classification.

SANITARY PERMITS REQUIRED

The installation or construction of a POWTS may not commence unless the owner of the property possesses a valid sanitary permit and plan approval has been obtained. In addition, no modification to an existing POWTS may commence unless the owner possesses a valid sanitary permit. Local government units may have additional requirements for specific counties. See the Sanitary Permit Factsheet for additional information.