

Minimum Distance Separation

Terms of Reference

1. Description

The Minimum Distance Separation (MDS) formulae and guidelines are land use planning tools that determine setback distances between livestock barns, manure storages or anaerobic digesters and surrounding land uses, with the objective of minimizing land use conflicts and nuisance complaints related to odour.

MDS is comprised of two separate, but related, formulae that act reciprocally to help site either new development or new/expanding livestock facilities:

- MDS I setbacks are determined between proposed new development and existing livestock barns, manure storages and/or anaerobic digesters.
- MDS II setbacks are determined between proposed new or altered livestock facilities and/or anaerobic digesters and existing or approved development, lot lines and road allowances.

2. Authority To Request

In Ontario's rural and prime agricultural areas, the *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020*, and other provincial land use plans require that new land uses, including the creation of lots and new or expanding livestock facilities, comply with the MDS formulae and guidelines.

3. When Required

Demonstrating that an MDS setback can be met, may be required before a land use/lot creation planning approval, including for plan of subdivision applications, or if a building permit can be issued.

4. Contents

The Minimum Distance Separation Report, will include the following:

- Analysis, referencing relevant guidelines as per [Minimum Distance Separation \(MDS\) Document, Publication 853](#).
- Air Photos identifying: all relevant buildings, lots, livestock facilities, digesters, manure systems (by address), the subject property(s) and any proposed dwellings within the appropriate distance identified in Publication 853.
- Photos of structures to which MDS applies.



- Complete City of Ottawa [Minimum Distance Separation II Data Information Submission](#) form(s) as needed
- Completed MDS calculations and details for each facility identifying who completed them and how the information was obtained.

5. Evaluation Criteria

The City is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of MDS are met when reviewing land use planning applications or building permits. To ensure MDS setbacks guidelines are adhered to, the City requires the proponent of the proposed development to provide the calculated MDS setback(s).

6. Roles and Responsibilities / Qualifications

It may be helpful for an applicant to hire a land use planning consultant, a nutrient management consultant or other qualified person to undertake the MDS calculation. In all cases, City staff must review any MDS calculations to ensure they are accurate. For more details follow the Ontario's [Minimum Distance Separation \(MDS\) Formulae and Guidelines](#) link.

7. Resources / Background

Ontario's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs links:

- [Minimum Distance Separation \(MDS\) Formulae and Guidelines](#)
- [Minimum Distance Separation \(MDS\) Document, Publication 853](#)
- The province has developed [AgriSuite software](#) which contains digital tools that allow users to quickly calculate MDS setbacks
- [Minimum Distance Separation for Building or Renovating a Farm Structure](#).

