



# ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



## LAND USE PROGRAM

5050 Commerce Drive, Baldwin Park, CA 91706

Telephone: (626) 430-5380 • Website: <http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh>

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## GRAYWATER SYSTEMS FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

### A. GRAYWATER SYSTEMS

Under State regulations, graywater is defined as untreated wastewater that has not been contaminated by toilet waste or unhealthy bodily wastes. Graywater includes wastewater from bathtubs, showers, bathroom washbasins, clothes washing machines, and laundry tubs, but does not include wastewater from kitchen sinks or dishwashers. A graywater system uses graywater for subsurface irrigation and may include tanks, valves, filters, pumps or other appurtenances along with piping and receiving landscape. Graywater shall not be used in spray irrigation and shall not be allowed to pond, runoff or be discharged directly into or reach any storm water system or any surface body of water. Additionally, graywater shall not be used to irrigate root crops or edible parts of food crops that touch the soil.

### B. PERMIT REQUIREMENT

A plumbing permit is required to be obtained from the Department of Building and Safety (Authority having Jurisdiction) prior to the erection, construction, reconstruction, installation, relocation or alteration of any graywater system. A plan review is also required to be obtained from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LADPH), (Public Health Authority having Jurisdiction). In order to approve plans and issue a permit for a graywater system, LADPH Plan Check requires the following:

1. A set of plans and specifications showing the graywater system. The graywater system shall be designed in accordance with the requirements in Chapter 16A, Part I of the Los Angeles County Code, Title 28 – Plumbing Code

Exception: For simple residential system meeting all the following conditions, a completed graywater standard plan (attached) is acceptable:

- a. Graywater discharge is 250 gallons or less per day;
  - b. The system does not include pumps to distribute graywater;
  - c. The system is not connected to any source of potable water or other irrigation systems;
  - d. Graywater is immediately discharged into the irrigation field without being stored
2. Approval from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) Cross Connection Control Unit. Incorporate DPH's requirements into the drawings. DPH is located at 5050 Commerce Dr., Room 116, Baldwin Park, CA 91706, Telephone number (626) 430-5290.
  3. Approval from the local Building & Safety Department

### C. EXEMPTION FROM PERMIT

A permit is not required from the Los Angeles Department Public Health for a graywater system in a one or two-family dwelling that is supplied by only a clothes-washer system provided the system does not require cutting of the existing plumbing piping and provided the following requirements are met:

1. The design shall allow for the user to have the option to direct the flow to the irrigation/ disposal field or the building sewer. The direction control of the graywater shall be clearly labeled and readily accessible to the user.
2. The installation, change, alteration or repair of the system shall not include a potable water connection, tank or a pump and shall not affect other building, plumbing, electrical or mechanical components including structural features, egress, fire-life safety, sanitation, potable water supply piping or accessibility.
3. The graywater shall be contained on the site where it is generated.
4. Graywater shall be directed to and contained within a subsurface irrigation or disposal field.
5. Ponding or runoff is prohibited and shall be considered a nuisance.
6. Graywater shall be released no less than two (2) inches below the surface of mulch, rock, or soil, or a solid shield covers the release point.
7. Graywater systems shall be designed to prevent contact of the graywater with humans and domestic pets.
8. Water used to wash diapers or similarly soiled or infectious garments shall not be used and shall be diverted to the building sewer.
9. Graywater shall not contain hazardous chemicals derived from activities such as cleaning car parts, washing greasy or oily rags, or disposing of waste solutions from home photo labs or similar hobbyist or home occupational activities. Graywater shall not contain waste from kitchen sinks or dishwashers.
10. Exemption from permit requirements of this code shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any graywater system to be installed in a manner that violates other provisions of this code or any other City or State laws or ordinances.
11. An operation and maintenance manual for a graywater installation shall be provided to the owner and occupant. The manual is to remain with the building throughout the life of the system and indicate that upon change of ownership or occupancy, the new owner or tenant shall be notified the structure contains a graywater system.
12. Comply with all other aspects of Chapter 16A, Part 1 of the 2011 the Los Angeles County Code, Title 28 – Plumbing Code (e.g. distance from property line, distance from building structure, etc).
13. Exemption from permit requirements of the code for clothes washer graywater systems shall not be deemed to grant authorization to perform other work that requires a permit.