



LOS ANGELES COUNTY ♦ DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH



Land Use Program

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**GRAYWATER SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS
FOR SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCES**

Introduction

In 2009, due to a statewide drought situation, the California Building Standards Commission in an effort to promote water conservation enacted emergency regulations that allows disposal of graywater generated through a clothes washer at a single family residence with no permit. The Emergency Building Standards became effective at local level on January 1, 2011.

As a result, an owner of single family property may disperse wash water from clothes washer (A laundry machine; no hand-washing sink, shower, or any other plumbing fixtures) at his/her property in conformance with the requirements described in Attachment I.

Property Owner's Responsibilities

1. The property owner shall inquire the Department representative regarding graywater, the requirements pertaining to graywater system and the design of the system to ensure that he/she is knowledgeable of all applicable requirements and health concerns associated with graywater systems and the proper method of dispersal. Furthermore, the property owner shall also seek advice from the Department representative to acquire knowledge in the following subject matters in order to decide whether the construction and maintenance of a graywater system is feasible and will meet his/her needs:
 - A. Applicable requirements prescribed in Attachment I and other related regulations described further.
 - B. Instructions as to how the graywater system must be designed, constructed and maintained.

The dispersal area shall be designed, constructed and maintained in a manner to protect surface and ground waters, to prevent vermin harborage/breeding and to ensure that the graywater disposed does not flow offsite and percolates through soil on the subject property.
 - C. All health and legal consequences associated with improperly designed or faulty graywater system.
 - D. Any alteration to the plumbing system of the residence requires approval from all applicable enforcing agencies.

2. The property owner shall provide the address of the site where graywater system is going to be installed and other relevant information required by the Department representative. The Department will maintain an inventory of sites with graywater systems for the purposes of tracking and notifying the property owner in the event when additional or different requirements have materialized in the future. Furthermore, the Department may also use the information in the future when the operation of graywater system has caused health concerns.
3. The property owner shall contact the Building and Safety Division of Department of Public Works for any applicable requirements.

Environmental Health Advisory

1. Graywater may contain fecal matter as a result of washing of undergarments. Wash water containing fecal matter, if swallowed, can cause illness in a susceptible person; therefore, graywater shall not be contacted by humans.
2. Graywater shall not be used for vegetable gardens.
3. The addition of a graywater system where there is an onsite wastewater treatment system (OWTS) is not beneficial to the operation of the OWTS. More importantly, when OWTS is equipped with supplemental treatment unit, the reduction in wastewater intake could compromise the performance expectancy of the unit.