



Blending artistry and ecology

Graywater Fact Sheet for Residential Clients

1. Basic, Non-Permitted System - Clothes Washer Systems (Laundry to Landscape)

The only type of Graywater System that does not require a local building permit, if there is no connection to a potable water supply, and for single and two-family dwellings only. Good for slab or non slab foundations, flat sites, and washers near exterior walls

Actual amount of water produced:

Top loading washer: 45 gal/ load*5 loads/ week*26 weeks/ year = 5,850 gallons of water/ 6 mo

Front loading washer: 25 gal/ load*5 loads/ week*26 weeks/ year = 3,250 gallons of water/ 6 mo

Theoretical amount of water produced:

Number of bedrooms: 4

Number of persons: 5 (2 people for master bedroom, 1 for every other bedroom)

15 gallons/ person-day * 5 persons * 26 weeks * 7 days = **13,650 gallons/ 6 mos.**

Twelve conditions apply to graywater systems:

1. If required, notification has been provided to the Enforcing Agency regarding the proposed location and installation of a graywater irrigation or disposal system. Note: A city, county, or city and county or other local government may, after a public hearing and enactment of an ordinance or resolution, further restrict or prohibit the use of graywater systems. For additional information, see Health and Safety Code Section 18941.7.
2. The design shall allow the user to direct the flow to the irrigation or disposal field or the building sewer. The direction control of the graywater shall be clearly labeled and readily accessible to the user.
3. The installation, change, alteration or repair of the system does not include a potable water connection or a pump and does not affect other building, plumbing, electrical or mechanical components including structural features, egress, fire-life safety, sanitation, potable water supply piping or accessibility.
4. The graywater shall be contained on the site where it is generated.
5. Graywater shall be directed to and contained within an irrigation or disposal field.
6. Ponding or runoff is prohibited and shall be considered a nuisance.

7. Graywater may be released above the ground surface provided at least two (2) inches (51 mm) of mulch, rock, or soil, or a solid shield covers the release point. Other methods which provide equivalent separation are also acceptable.

8. Graywater systems shall be designed to minimize contact with humans and domestic pets.

9. Water used to wash diapers or similarly soiled or infectious garments shall not be used and shall be diverted to the building sewer.

10. 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.

11. Exemption from construction 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 laws or ordinances of the Enforcing Agency.

12. An operation and maintenance manual shall be provided. Directions shall indicate 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.

2. Permitted Graywater Systems – Branched Drain or Pumped Systems

1. Simple System. Up to 250 gallons per day of discharge, not including a clothes washer.
 2. Complex System. Over 250 gpd of discharge.
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General Rules

- These rules affect residential buildings only.
- Kitchen sinks, dishwashers, and diaper soiled water are not included in the definition of graywater.
- No ponding, spray, runoff of graywater to the storm sewer system, or contamination of groundwater.
- All systems must have an air-gap or suitable backflow prevention to protect the potable water supply.
- Not for root crops or edible portions of food crops in contact with the soil

More Resources:

Santa Clara Valley Water District graywater rebates: <http://www.valleywater.org/GraywaterRebate.aspx>
SFPUC Graywater manual: <http://sfwater.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=55>
Laundry to Landscape DVD by Art Ludwig, www.oasisdesign.net
Clean Water Components – www.cleanwatercomponents.com
Graywater Action, www.graywateraction.org