

Permit Exempt Clothes Washer Graywater System Guidelines

What is Graywater?

Graywater is water from washing machines, showers, bathtubs and bathroom sinks. Water from toilets, kitchen sinks, or wash water from diapers **is not** considered graywater in California.

Benefits of Graywater Reuse

- Decreases potable water use by 16 to 40 percent depending on the house/site (Cohen 2009)
- Decreases water and wastewater utility bills
- Protects our natural resources
- Reduces the energy and chemicals needed to treat wastewater
- Encourages the use of non toxic products
- Provides drought insurance for your landscape



When a Permit is Not Required

All of the following must be met:

- Graywater comes from the clothes washing machine only.
- Graywater system does not alter the household plumbing.
- Graywater system is for a one or two-unit residential building.
- Graywater system follows 12 Guidelines set forth in the California Plumbing Code. (see reverse side)

When a Permit Is Required

- If the Graywater system collects water from showers, sinks, or baths.
- If the Graywater system alters the plumbing (you cut into the drainage plumbing to access the graywater).
- Graywater system is installed in a building that is not a one or two-unit residential building.
- The Graywater system includes a pump or a tank.
- These types of graywater systems require plans and permits consistent with Chapter 16 of the 2013 UPC.



A building permit is not required for a graywater system supplied by a clothes washer in compliance with all of the following:

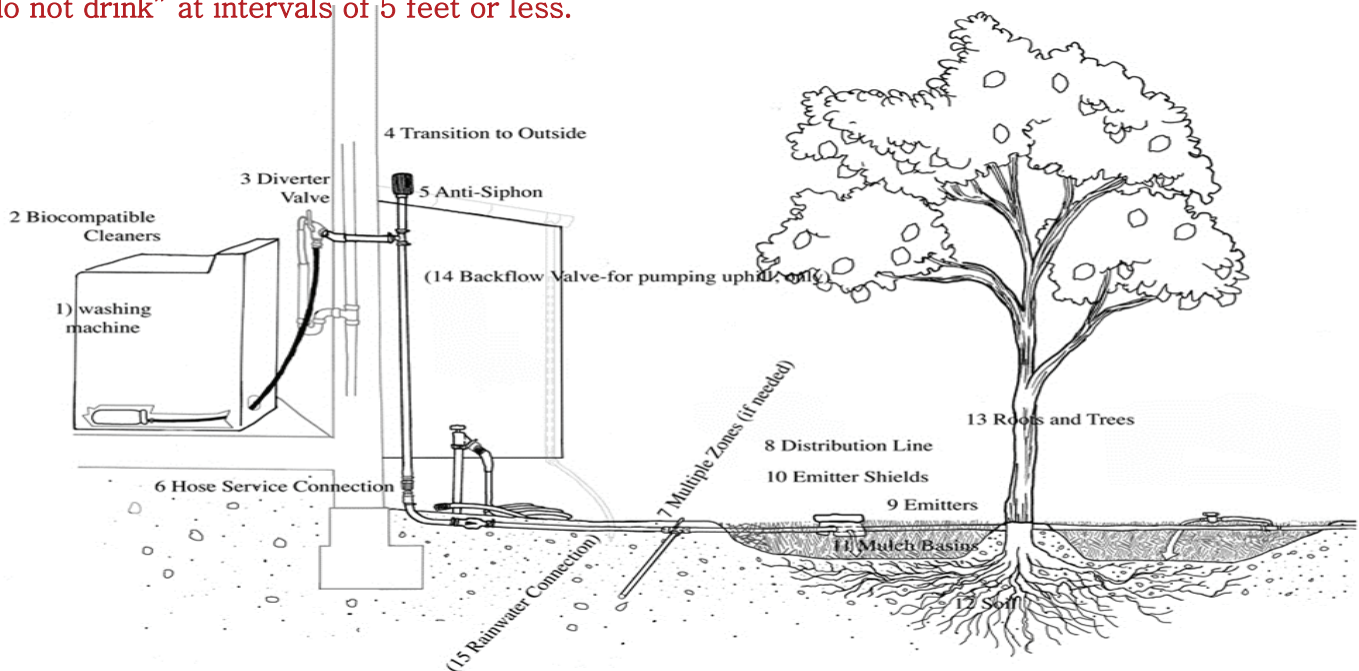
1. The design shall allow the user to direct the flow to the irrigation or disposal field or the building sewer. The direction control of the graywater shall be clearly labeled and readily accessible to the user.
2. The installation, change, alteration or repair of the system does not include a potable 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 or accessibility. Note: the pump in a clothes washer shall not be considered part of the gray water system.
3. The graywater shall be contained on the site where it is generated.
4. Gray water shall be directed to and contained within as irrigation or disposal field.
5. Gray water shall be directed to and contained within an irrigation or disposal field meeting the following minimum setbacks:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Building structures (not including porches, breezeways, carports, etc.) - 2ft | |
| Property lines - 5ft | septic tanks - 5 ft |
| Water wells - 100ft. | Public water main - 10ft |
| Streams and lakes - 100ft | Leach Fields - 4ft |

See table 1602.4 of the 2013 California Plumbing Code for additional applicable requirements.

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 of mulch, rock, soil or a solid shield covers the release point.
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 building sewer.
10. Graywater shall not contain hazardous chemicals derived from activities such as cleaning car parts, washing greasy rags, or disposing of waste solutions from home photo labs or similar hobbyist or home occupational activities.
11. Exception from a permit shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any graywater system to be installed in a manner that violates other provisions of the Plumbing or Municipal Codes.
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 gray water system.

Note: You must label all above-ground graywater pipes as follows: "Caution: Non-potable water, do not drink" at intervals of 5 feet or less.



All systems shall comply with Chapter 16 of the 2013 Edition of the California Plumbing Code.