



CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

BUILDING DIVISION

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GRAY WATER CLOTHES WASHER SYSTEM

A. GRAY WATER SYSTEMS

Under State regulations, gray water is defined as untreated wastewater that has not been contaminated by toilet waste or unhealthy bodily wastes. Gray water includes wastewater from bathtubs, showers, bathroom washbasins, cloths washing machines, and laundry tubs, but does not include wastewater from kitchen sinks or dishwashers.

A gray water system uses gray water for subsurface irrigation and may include tanks, valves, filters, pumps or other appurtenances along with piping and receiving landscape. Gray water shall not be used in spray irrigation and shall not be allowed to pond, runoff or be discharged directly into reach any storm water system or any surface body of water. Additionally, gray water shall not be used to irrigate root crops or edible parts that touch the soil.

B. PERMIT REQUIRED

A plumbing permit is required to be obtained from the Building Division prior to installation or alteration of any gray water system. In order to approve plans and issue a permit for gray water, plan review is required.

C. EXEMPTION FROM A PERMIT

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

California Plumbing Code Section 1602.1.1 addresses Clothes Washer System. A clothes washer system in compliance with all of the following is exempt from the construction permit and may be installed or altered without a construction permit.

1. Notification shall be provided to the Building Division regarding the proposed location and installation of a gray water irrigation or disposal system.
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 gray water 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 gray water shall be contained on the site where it is generated.
5. Gray water 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. Gray water may be released above the ground surface provided at least (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. Gray water 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. Gray water 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 gray water system to be installed in a manner that violates other provisions of this code or any other laws or ordinances of the City.
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.

