



## INFORMATION BULLETIN / PUBLIC - PLUMBING CODE

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# GRAY WATER SYSTEMS FOR RESIDENTIAL BUILDINGS

## A. GRAY WATER SYSTEMS

Under the 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, clothes 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, allowed to pond or runoff, allowed to be discharged directly into or reach any storm water system or any surface body of water, and shall not be used to irrigate root crops or edible parts of food crops that touch the soil.

On-site treated nonpotable gray water systems meeting Chapter 16 of the plumbing code are permitted to supply water closets, urinals, trap primers for floor drains and floor sinks, above and belowground irrigation.

## B. PERMIT REQUIREMENT

A plumbing permit is required to be obtained from the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS) prior to the erection, construction, reconstruction, installation, relocation or alteration of any gray water system. The Mechanical Plan Check Section of LADBS will require the following in order to approve the plans and issue a permit for a gray water system:

1. A set of plans and specifications showing the gray water system. The gray water system shall be designed in accordance with the requirements in Chapter 16 of the 2014 Los Angeles Plumbing Code.

Exception: For simple systems meeting the following conditions, a completed gray water standard plan issued by LADBS (see attachment 1) is acceptable:

- a. Simple system: Gray water discharge is 250 gallons or less per day (LAPC 1602.1.2)
- b. Gravity systems: System that do not include pumps to distribute gray water
- c. Stand alone: your system is not connected to any source of potable water or other irrigation systems

- d. No storage: gray water is discharged into the irrigation field immediately without being stored
2. Approval from 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. Gray water systems being installed in the City of Los Angeles within the designated "Hillside Grading Area" require approval from LADBS' Grading Division.

### **C. EXEMPTION FROM PERMIT**

A permit is not required from the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety for a gray water 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 gray water shall be clearly labeled and readily accessible to the user. (LAPC 1602.1.1 (2))
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. (LAPC 1602.1.1 (3))
3. The gray water shall be contained on the site where it is generated. (LAPC 1602.1.1 (4))
4. Gray water shall be directed to and contained within a subsurface irrigation or disposal field. (LAPC 1602.1.1 (5))
5. Ponding or runoff is prohibited and shall be considered a nuisance. (LAPC 1602.1.1 (6))
6. Gray water shall be released no less than two (2) inches below the surface of mulch, rock, or soil. (LAPC 1602.1.1 (7))
7. Gray water systems shall be designed to allow no contact of the gray water with humans and domestic pets. (LAPC 1602.1.1 (8))
8. Water used to wash diapers or similarly soiled or infectious garments shall not be used and shall be diverted to the building sewer. (LAPC 1602.1.1 (9))

9. 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. Gray water shall not contain waste from kitchen sinks or dishwashers. (LAPC 1602.1.1 (10))
10. Exemption from 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 Enforcing Agency. (LAPC 1602.1.1 (11))
11. An operation and maintenance manual for a gray water installation shall be provided. 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. (LAPC 1602.1.1 (12))
12. Comply with all other aspects of Chapter 16 of the 2014 Los Angeles Plumbing Code (e.g. distance from property line, distance from building structure, etc).
13. Exemption from permit requirements of this code for clothes washer gray water systems shall not be deemed to grant authorization to perform other work that requires a permit.
14. Any required fire rated separation, such as the one between the house and the attached parking garage, shall be maintained.