



# *Fact Sheet regarding* **Graywater Discharge in Santa Barbara County**

Revised 11-4-11

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## **I. Graywater discharge from residential clothes washers.**

The 2010 California Plumbing Code stipulates that no construction permit is necessary for graywater discharge from a clothes washer (provided that no cutting of existing plumbing is needed). Furthermore, AB849, which was passed by the California legislature in 2011, stipulates that a local jurisdiction cannot impose more restrictive requirements unless the jurisdiction makes additional findings and justifications after holding public hearings.

The Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors has adopted the 2010 CA Plumbing Code, and the County has no plans of pursuing more restrictive requirements as allowed under AB849. **Therefore, within Santa Barbara County, no construction permit is required for graywater discharge from a clothes washer (provided there is no cutting of existing plumbing).**

The language in the existing County code [in Section 29-8(a)] currently continues to indicate that a permit is required, but this section is not enforceable since the passage of AB849. The language in the County code will eventually be amended to agree with the State code.

Although no construction permit is required for clothes washer graywater discharge, under the State Plumbing Code the following rules apply to these clothes washer discharges:

### **Rules that apply to graywater discharge from clothes washers:**

#### Connections:

1. These new regulations for clothes washer discharge apply to single or two-family residential buildings only.
2. The design shall allow the user to direct the flow to the irrigation or disposal field or to 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 cannot include a potable water connection or a pump and cannot affect other building, plumbing, electrical or mechanical components including structural features, egress, fire-life safety, sanitation, potable water supply piping or accessibility.
4. All graywater reuse systems must have an air-gap or suitable backflow prevention to protect the potable water system.

#### Discharge sites:

5. The graywater shall be contained on the property site where it is generated.
6. Graywater shall be directed to and contained within an irrigation or disposal field.
7. Ponding, spray or runoff is prohibited and shall be considered a nuisance.
8. Graywater cannot be used for watering root crops or for wetting edible portions of food crops.

9. 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.

Discharge, Water Contact and Contents:

10. Graywater systems shall be designed to minimize contact with humans and domestic pets.
11. Water used to wash diapers or similarly soiled or infectious garments shall not be used and shall be diverted to the building sewer.
12. 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.

Code Compliance and O&M:

13. 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.
14. 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.
15. If required, notification has been provided to the Enforcing Agency regarding the proposed location and installation of a graywater irrigation or disposal system.

**II. In unincorporated areas of Santa Barbara County, a County permit is required for other graywater discharge, i.e, not from a clothes washer.**

See Section 29-8(a) of the Santa Barbara County Code – Storm Drains and Sanitary Sewers. To obtain a County graywater permit, residents in unincorporated areas can set up an appointment with an Environmental Health Specialist by calling the County's Environmental Health Services Division at 681-4900 on the south coast or 346-8460 in north County.

**III. Residents in incorporated cities must contact their City staff to determine whether any approvals must be obtained for non-clothes washer discharge.**

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