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SIMPLE GRAY WATER SYSTEMS

Laundry to Landscape

California Plumbing Standards

The California Plumbing Code (Sec. 1503) regulates Gray Water Systems. Gray Water Systems are divided into 3-types of systems. Clothes Washer Systems, Simple Systems and Complex systems.

A Gray Water system, utilizing only a single domestic clothes washing machine in a one or two family dwelling, in compliance with all of the following, may be installed without a construction permit:

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 gray water 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 piping, or accessibility.
3. The gray water shall be contained on the site where it is generated.
4. Gray water shall be directed to and contained within an irrigation or disposal field.
5. Ponding or runoff is prohibited and shall be considered a nuisance.
6. Gray water 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.
7. Gray water systems shall be designed to minimize contact with humans and domestic pets.
8. Water used to wash diapers, or similarly soiled or infectious garments shall not be used and shall be diverted to the building sewer.
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.
10. 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 enforcing agency.

11. An operation and maintenance manual shall be provided to the owner. Directions shall indicate that the manual is to remain with the building throughout the life of the system and upon change of ownership or occupancy.

1503.1.2 Simple System

Simple systems exceed a clothes washer system and shall comply with the following:

1. The discharge capacity of a gray water system shall be determined by Section 1503.8. Simple systems have a discharge capacity of 250 gallons (947 L) per day or less.
2. Simple systems shall require a construction permit.
3. The design of simple systems shall meet generally accepted gray water system design criteria.

1503.1.3 Complex System

Any gray water system that is not a clothes washer system or simple system shall comply with the following:

1. The discharge capacity of a gray water system shall be determined by Section 1503.8. Complex systems have a discharge capacity over 250 gallons (947 L) per day.
2. Complex systems shall require a construction permit, unless exempted from a construction permit by the Enforcing Agency. The Enforcing Agency shall consult with the water purveyor for any public water system (as defined in Health and Safety Code, Section 116275) providing drinking water to the dwelling or non-residential structure before allowing an exemption from a construction permit.

Figure 7.6: Laundry to Landscape system

