



Frequently asked questions about

Graywater

What is graywater? Graywater is untreated wastewater that has not been contaminated by any toilet discharge. Graywater includes wastewater from bathtubs, showers, bathroom sinks, clothes washing machines and laundry sinks. It does not include wastewater from kitchen sinks, dishwashers, photo lab sinks or laundry water from soiled diapers.

What is a graywater system? Graywater systems are onsite wastewater systems that use graywater for subsurface landscape irrigation through the use of mulch basins, disposal trenches or subsurface drip irrigation fields.

Are there regulations for using graywater? Yes. The regulations for the design, construction and use of graywater systems can be found in Chapter 16A of the California Plumbing Code (CPC). A copy of the emergency regulations adopted on August 4, 2009 and the modifications approved for adoption on January 27, 2010 can be found at the County of San Diego's website: http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh/lwqd/lu_graywater_systems.html

Why is graywater regulated? The purpose of regulating the design, installation and maintenance of graywater systems is to protect public and environmental health by ensuring that these systems can operate in all weather conditions with minimal maintenance; prevent the contamination of groundwater from improperly designed graywater systems; prevent the contamination of surface water from improperly designed and operated graywater systems; and prevent contact with effluent by humans and animals.

Who regulates graywater in San Diego County? The County of San Diego Department of Environmental Health (DEH) has been delegated the authority to regulate graywater systems in the unincorporated area of San Diego County by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). DEH does not regulate graywater systems in the incorporated cities in San Diego County. These cities can implement a

Continued on back page

Sweetwater Authority provides safe, reliable water to National City, Chula Vista and Bonita



Frequently asked questions about graywater

Continued from front page

program of their own that meets or exceeds the requirements of the CPC with approval from the RWQCB. Questions regarding graywater systems within an incorporated city should be addressed by that city.

Can I allow my graywater to discharge to the ground surface? Due to the potential for high levels of bacteria and viruses in graywater, graywater must be used in a way that eliminates potential human contact or the creation of public and environmental health problems.

The regulations for graywater systems allows for subsurface irrigation only, although graywater can be discharged to the ground surface in a mulch basin as long as it remains covered with at least two inches of mulch, rock or soil.

Where can I find more information about graywater? Additional information regarding graywater and onsite wastewater systems is available on the DEH website at http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh/lwqd/lu_graywater_systems.html. You can also call the DEH Land and Water Quality Division office at 858-565-5173. (*Information courtesy of the County of San Diego.*) Information from the city of Chula Vista can be found online at <http://www.chulavistaca.gov/home/showdocument?id=5365>.

Who to contact about graywater if you live in:

Chula Vista: Contact the City of Chula Vista Building Division at 619-585-5622.

National City: Contact National City's Building Division at 619-336-4210. City Hall hours are Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Closed on Fridays.

Bonita and other unincorporated areas of San Diego County: As noted above, check the County's website at http://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/sdc/deh/lwqd/lu_graywater_systems.html, or call the DEH Land and Water Quality Division office at 858-565-5173.

Sweetwater Authority
505 Garrett Avenue
Chula Vista, CA 91910
619-420-1413
www.sweetwater.org