General Permit BMPs

Follow these best management practices to comply with Arizona's rules for gray water use

- First and foremost, avoid human contact with gray water, or soil irrigated with gray water.
- You may use gray water for household gardening, composting, and lawn and landscape irrigation, but use it in a way that it does not run off your own property.
- Do not surface irrigate any plants that produce food, except for citrus and nut trees.
- Use only flood or drip irrigation to water lawns and landscaping. Spraying gray water is prohibited.
- When determining the location for your gray water irrigation, remember that it cannot be in a wash or drainage carrying runoff.
- Gray water may only be used in locations where groundwater is at least five feet below the surface.
- Label pipes carrying gray water under pressure to eliminate confusion between gray water and drinking water pipes.
- Cover, seal and secure storage tanks to restrict access by small rodents and to control disease carrying insects such as mosquitoes.
- Gray water cannot contain hazardous chemicals such as antifreeze, mothballs and solvents. Do not include wash water from greasy or oily rags in your gray water.
- Gray water from washing diapers or other infectious garments must be discharged to a residential sewer or other wastewater facility, unless the gray water is disinfected prior to its use.
- Minimize surface accumulation of gray water to promote drying of soil.
- Filters may be used to reduce plugging and extend the gray water system's lifetime. If the gray water system becomes plugged or blocked, the gray water must be directed into your normal wastewater drain system.
- You may not reduce the capacity or reserve area requirements of your septic tank or other on-site wastewater disposal system because you are using gray water.

ADEQ Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

Contacts for Gray Water Information

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Southern Regional Office - Tucson

Serving Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, Pima and Santa Cruz Counties

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Community Liaisons

ADEQ has community liaisons located throughout the state to assist residents in rural communities. To find out how to contact the community liaison nearest you, call the regional office in your area. In addition to providing ADEQ specific information, your community liaison can suggest a specific person in your county government to contact about gray water.

This brochure is available at
azdeq.gov/environ/water/permits/download/graybro.pdf

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Using Gray Water at Home

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's Guide to Complying with the Type 1 General Permit

ADEQ Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

Janice K. Brewer, Governor
Benjamin H. Grumbles, Director

Every drop of water counts. By using gray water, we help save our fresh water supplies by not applying drinking water to landscape plants.

What is gray water?

Gray water is defined as wastewater, collected separately from sewage, that originates from a clothes washer, bathtub, shower or sink, but **not** from a kitchen sink, dishwasher or toilet.

Gray water is distinguished from "black water," which is wastewater from toilets, kitchen sinks and dishwashers. Black water should not be reused in or around the home because of risk of contamination by bacteria, viruses and other pathogens.

Gray water may contain fats, oils, grease, hair, lint, soaps, cleansers, fabric softeners and other chemicals. Gray water can also contain elevated levels of chlorides, sodium, borax and sulfates and have a high pH (is alkaline) that may be harmful to some plants. So it is important to know what is contained in products that are put down household drains.

ADEQ's rules make the approval process easy for home owners to use gray water at their homes. ADEQ based its rules, in part, on the results of a gray water study conducted by the Water Conservation Alliance of Southern Arizona (www.watercasa.org/) in Tucson.

The basic requirements to use gray water at your home are simple:

- Residents must adhere to the guidelines for a Reclaimed Water Type 1 General Permit. A Type 1 General Permit requires **no** formal notification to the department, **no** review or design approval, and **no** public notice, reporting or renewal.
- Although you don't have to apply to receive a formal permit for permission to use gray water, you must abide by the 13 best management practices (BMPs) provided in this brochure, which were developed to protect public health and water quality.

Permit Eligibility and Usage Requirements

- The general permit is meant for private residential use only. Gray water must be used on the site where it is generated. The area of use cannot be accessible by the public.
- Under this general permit, gray water can only be used for irrigation – not for dust control, cooling or other water uses.
- Only drip or flood irrigation with gray-water is allowed. Spray irrigation is not permitted due to the potential for inhalation or drifting off-site.
- Gray water flow must be less than 400 gallons per day.

In general, no city, town or county may limit the use of gray water if the use is allowed by this general permit (ARS §49-204).

You may download the gray water rule at www.azsos.gov/public_services/title_18/18-09.pdf. The requirements for household use are found in Title 18, Chapter 9, Article 7 (A.A.C. R-18-9-711).