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 way.
- 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 it can be disinfected prior to its use.
- Surface accumulation of gray water must be kept to a minimum.
- Should a backup occur, gray water must be disposed into your normal wastewater drain system. To avoid such a backup, consider using a filtration system to reduce plugging and extend the system's lifetime.
- If you have a septic or other on-site wastewater disposal system, your gray water use does not change that system's design requirements for capacity and reserve areas.

ADEQ Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

Contacts for Gray Water Information

Phoenix Main Office
Serving Gila, La Paz, Maricopa, Pinal and Yuma Counties
1110 W. Washington St., Phoenix, AZ 85007

(602) 771-2300
Toll Free (800) 234-5677
TDD (602) 771-4829
pmo@azdeq.gov

Northern Regional Office - Flagstaff
Serving Apache, Coconino, Mohave, Navajo and Yavapai Counties

(928) 779-0313
Toll Free (877) 602-3675
nro@azdeq.gov

Southern Regional Office - Tucson
Serving Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, Pima and Santa Cruz Counties

(520) 628-6733
Toll Free (888) 271-9302
sro@azdeq.gov

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/graywater.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

Janet Napolitano, Governor
Stephen A. Owens, ADEQ Director

Every drop of water counts. By using gray water, we 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 your sewage flow, 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 the home because of high 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.

To make the process easier for homeowners who want to use gray water at their homes, ADEQ developed the rules with stakeholder input. Many of these rules are based on the results of a gray water study conducted in the Tucson area, which you can view at www.watercasa.org/research/residential/resindex.htm.

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) listed 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).

For a copy of the gray water rule, call the nearest ADEQ office or download it at www.azsos.gov/public_services/title_18/18-09.pdf. The gray water rule can be found in Title 18, Chapter 9, Article 7.