



## 2023 Graywater Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q: What is the status of Graywater regulations IN COLORADO as of January 2023?**

**A:** The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) Water Quality Control Division (WQCD) presented an update on the stakeholder engagement schedule with the Water Quality Control Division in February 2022 as part of the triennial review process. **The division is working with stakeholders to develop a regulation change proposal for the Water Quality Control Commission in August 2023.**

### **Q: What is DELTA COUNTY Health Department currently doing?**

**A:** The Environmental Health staff for Delta County are participating in the stakeholder engagement process with CDPHE to revise state Regulation 86 (Graywater Regulations) in a way that make graywater implementation in Delta County **cost effective and water efficient**. Staff are also participating in the “Laundry-to-Landscape (L2L) subgroup” to write specific language into the regulations that make simple, low-cost systems possible. Current state regulations, as written, result in a rate-of-return of more than 30 years. It is hoped that the efforts of our staff and other stakeholders will reduce the cost while keeping efficiency in the design.

### **Q: Is Graywater capture and use allowed in DELTA COUNTY?**

**A:** In short, **No**. Regulation 86 provides for an “opt-in” program for local jurisdictions and not a statewide program. ***Adopting a county ordinance now would not take advantage of planned changes (like L2L) in the regulations***, and would require readoption again after new changes took effect at the state level. Section 86.4 currently states:

#### **Voluntary Local Graywater Control Programs**

Each local city, city and county, or county has the discretion to decide whether to adopt any of the graywater uses along with the associated minimum design criteria and control measures set forth in this regulation.

**The County doesn’t have a graywater ordinance at this time, but Delta County Environmental Health is looking at the feasibility of this type of program, its costs, and the appropriate mechanisms for implementation. Municipalities currently have the ability to draft their own regulations, and the Health Department would support that effort.**

### **Q: What is Graywater?**

**A:** Graywater is a part of the water used in a residential, commercial, or industrial building that may be collected after the first use and put to a second beneficial use. [Regulation 86](#) outlines requirements, prohibitions, and standards for graywater use for non-drinking

purposes. They can be found at:

<https://www.sos.state.co.us/CCR/GenerateRulePdf.do?ruleVersionId=6527&%2CfileName=5%20CCR%201002-86>. “Black water” is the term generally used for wastewater: “the combination of liquid wastes (sewage) which may include chemicals, household wastes, human excreta, animal or vegetable matter in suspension or solution, or other solids in suspension or solution which are discharged from a dwelling, building or other structure.”

**Q: What are appropriate sources of Graywater?**

**A:** Graywater sources may include water discharged from:

- Bathroom and laundry-room sinks.
- Bathtubs.
- Showers.
- Laundry machines.

Graywater may not include water discharged from:

- Toilets.
- Urinals.
- Kitchen sinks.
- Dishwashers.
- Non-laundry utility sinks.

**Q: I have a composting toilet; can all my other water go to plants and landscaping?**

**A:** The short answer is NO. Current [Onsite-Wastewater Regulations](#) (43.12, E,3) state that “An incinerating or composting toilet may be used for toilet waste where an OWTS is installed for treating wastewater remaining after removal of toilet waste.” All other appliances that produce wastewater will be connected to the septic system unless sewer is available.

**Q: Well if I can't use graywater, can I capture rainwater?**

**A:** Most homeowners in Colorado are now allowed to use rain barrels to collect rainwater.

- A maximum of two rain barrels with a combined storage of 110 gallons or less are allowed at each household.
- Collected rainwater may be used to irrigate outdoor lawns, plants or gardens.
- Untreated rainwater collected from roofs is not safe to drink!
- [CSU Extension- Rainwater Collection in Colorado?](#) The purpose of this factsheet is to provide information about the regulatory and health aspects of rainwater collection in Colorado. The information provided in this factsheet is based primarily on language in Colorado House Bill 16-1005 and is intended to inform citizens on how to properly use rain barrels in accordance with Colorado law.

**Q: What other information is there on Graywater?**

**A:** For more information about graywater, please see the [graywater information sheet](#). Or go to:

- Colorado Graywater website:  
<https://cdphe.colorado.gov/water-quality/clean-water/graywater>
- Colorado Graywater regulations:  
<https://www.sos.state.co.us/CCR/GenerateRulePdf.do?ruleVersionId=6527&fileName=5%20CCR%201002-86>
- SanFrancisco Graywater Design Manual- Resources:  
<https://sfpuc.org/learning/conserves-water/save-water-outdoors>  
[https://sfpuc.org/sites/default/files/learning/conservation/Graywater-DesignManual\\_NOV2017.pdf](https://sfpuc.org/sites/default/files/learning/conservation/Graywater-DesignManual_NOV2017.pdf)
- Western slope conservation center, Paonia (Bruce Woodside [warnwood@me.com](mailto:warnwood@me.com) 918-821-4741; Jake Hartter [Jake@theconservationcenter.org](mailto:Jake@theconservationcenter.org) 970-527-5307). Regular meetings (via Google meet, 2nd Thursday of the month.)
- For a quick video on a simple L2L (Laundry to Landscape system), watch:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNNnhCJGY38> Please be aware that this was filmed in May 20, 2014 and doesn't necessarily comply with any current or planned Colorado Graywater regulations. It is strictly for educational purposes.

***If you'd like to be part of our process to draft local regulations, send an email to [eh@deltacountyco.gov](mailto:eh@deltacountyco.gov) with your information.***