

Attachment

COMMENTS REGARDING THE PROPOSED EMERGENCY BUILDING STANDARDS

Prepared by Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH),
Land Use Program

DPH supports the idea intended through the referenced emergency building standards. We believe that due to the potential public health impacts, additional regulatory measures should be reinstated by amending certain sections, as follows:

1. Section 1601A.0; Exemption under Subsection (D) provides means for a typical property owner to utilize graywater for irrigation and/or disposal purposes without obtaining authorization from the Enforcing Agency. We believe that the design and construction of graywater systems require regulatory oversight to ensure proper operation and dispersal of graywater.
Section 1601A.0; Subsection (F) states that, *“Water used to wash diapers or similarly soiled or infectious garments or other prohibited contents shall be diverted by the user to the building sewer”*. We foresee that the expectation that the property owners will go to the extent of designing the graywater systems with diverter valves to allow the graywater containing prohibited contents to drain into the building sewer and be mindful of switching the valve when such washes are performed is unrealistic.
Section 1601A.0; Subsection (G) states that, *“Graywater shall not be used in spray irrigation, allowed to pond or runoff and shall be discharged directly or reach any storm sewer system or any surface water system”*. We are concerned that without regulatory oversight, systems designed by typical property owners will not be efficiently operated and consequently will not be maintained to prevent ponding and runoff of graywater.
Section 1601A.0; Subsection (H) states that, *...The discharge point of any graywater irrigation or disposal fields shall be covered by at least (2) inches (51mm) of mulch, rock,* We are concerned that (2) inches of covering materials, such as, mulch or similar material will not provide adequate protection to prevent human contact.
Section 1601A.0; Subsection (I) states that, *“Graywater shall not be used to irrigate root crops or edible parts of food crops that touch the soil”*. We realize that this section requires that graywater not be used for vegetable gardens; there is no mechanism to ensure that this provision is understood by the property owners.

2. Section 1603A.1.1. As mentioned above, the design, construction and installation of graywater systems is complex and require regulatory oversight to prevent public health concerns that could result from faulty design and/or installation of such systems by typical property owner. Moreover, we note that the revisions stipulate that the property owners shall design, construct, install and maintain graywater systems in accordance with the conditions set forth under this section; without a permitting procedure, there is no practical way to ensure that this stipulation will be followed by the property owners.
3. Section 1604A.1 states that, “*Verification of ground water levels that exceed three (3) vertical feet (915 mm) below the deepest irrigation or disposal point of the proposed graywater system shall not be required*”. We are concerned that this provision will compromise the protection of underlying drinking water supplies. In some cases, the seasonal groundwater for the area may not be known or due to drought conditions may be at lower level than it should.
4. Section 1608A; Subsection (C) states that, “*When a percolation test is required, no graywater system shall be permitted if the test shows the absorption capacity of the soil is unable to accommodate the intended discharge of the proposed graywater system*”. This section refers to a test; however the section does not provide any perimeters for the acceptable percolation rates for the testing. Hence, the previously established boundary for the acceptable percolation capacity (0.83 gal./ft./day to 5.12 gal./ft./day) should be reinstated.
5. Table 16A-1 indicates that the minimum horizontal distance required from an onsite domestic water service line to irrigation field and dispersal field is 0 feet (0mm). It appears that the required distances may have been left out inadvertently. However, if the intent is to allow irrigation and dispersal fields to be located beside to onsite domestic water service lines, we contend that this could potentially create serious water contamination. Since some domestic water service lines operate under low head pressure, it become significantly important to maintain adequate distance from dispersal area to prevent back siphonage of graywater into the domestic water supply lines.

The amendment of abovementioned sections will better correspond to the premise of public health and the expected roles of Health Officer. Furthermore, in order for property owners to benefit from the use of these standards, they should bear the burden of demonstrating that utilization of graywater for irrigation or disposal purposes would be in manners that minimize the possibility of creating health risks associated with such waters.