The California Building Standards Commission (BSC) on July 30, 2009 adopted new code language for residential graywater use that took effect August 4, 2009. This rulemaking is found in the California Plumbing Code, Title 24, Part 5, Chapter 16A, Part I.

General Rules

· These new regulations apply to single or two-family residential buildings only.
· Kitchen sink, toilets, and diaper soiled water are not included in the definition of graywater.
· No ponding, spray, or exposed runoff of graywater is allowed.
· All systems must have an air-gap or suitable backflow prevention to protect the potable water system.
· Not for root crops or edible portions of food crops.

When is a Permit is Not Required

The only type of graywater system that DOES NOT require a City building permit is a clothes washer graywater system.

Eleven conditions apply to this type of graywater system that does not require a permit:

1. The design shall allow the user to direct the flow to the irrigation or disposal field or the building sewer. The direction control of the graywater shall be clearly labeled and readily accessible to the user.

2. The installation, change, alteration or repair of the system does not include a potable water connection or a pump and does not affect other building, plumbing, electrical or mechanical components including structural features, egress, fire life safety, sanitation, potable water supply or accessibility.

3. The graywater shall be contained on the site where it is generated.

4. Graywater shall be directed to and contained within an irrigation or disposal field.

5. Ponding or runoff is prohibited and shall be considered a nuisance.

6. Graywater may be released above the ground surface provided at least two (2) inches of mulch, rock, soil or a solid shield covers the release point.

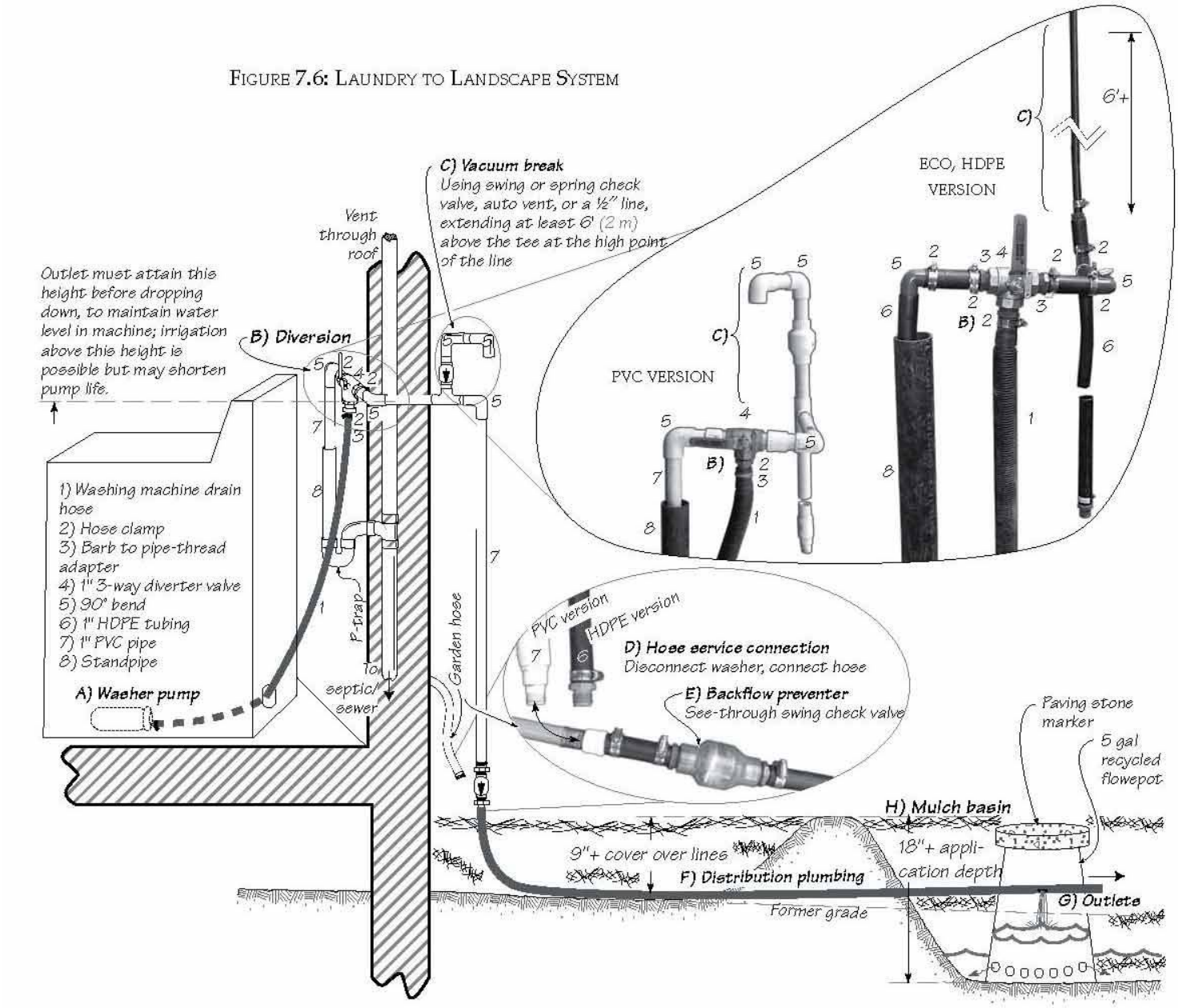
7. Graywater systems shall be designed to minimize contact with humans and domestic pets.

8. Water used to wash diapers or similarly soiled or infectious garments shall not be used and shall be diverted to building sewer.

9. Graywater shall not contain hazardous chemicals derived from activities such as cleaning car parts, washing greasy rags, or disposing of waste solutions from home photo labs or similar hobbyist or home occupational activities.

10. Exception from a permit shall not be deemed to grant authorization for any graywater system to be installed in a manor that violates other provisions of the Plumbing or Municipal Codes.

11. An operation and maintenance manual shall be provided. Directions shall indicate the manual is to remain with the building throughout the life of the system and indicate that upon change of ownership or occupancy, the new owner or tenant shall be notified the structure contains a graywater system.



Sample " Laundry to Landscape" single fixture connection:

The following websites have additional information on graywater systesm, graywater codes, and the effects of laundry detergents and equipment used in graywater systems:

http://oasisdesign.net/
http://www.oasisdesign.net/greywater/laundry/index/php
http://www.hcd.ca.gov/codes/shi/Preface_ET_emergency_graywater/pdf
http://www.owue.water.ca.gov/docs/graywater_guide_book.pdf