

Household reuse of wastewater

Council encourages residents to reduce water consumption, this is especially important with current water usage restrictions. Reusing household wastewater could significantly reduce the amount of water you use. However, it is important that regulatory, health and environmental issues associated are considered.

What is Greywater

Greywater (sometimes called sullage) is all non-toilet wastewater. It includes water from showers, baths, spas, handbasins, washing machines, laundry troughs, dishwashers and kitchen sinks.

What are the risks?

Greywater is often contaminated with microorganisms (bacteria, viruses, protozoa) that could cause disease. The health risk associated with greywater cannot be eliminated but can be minimised with careful management and responsible use.

Greywater can also pose environmental risks as it can contain many pollutants such as dirt, lint, food, human waste and chemicals such as detergents and other cleaning agents.

Do I need a permit?

If the diversion system does not:

- Store the diverted water for more than 24 hours, or
- Subject the diverted water to any type of treatment*,

It does not require a permit.

*Treatment is described as any physical, chemical or biological processing of the water prior to discharge. This includes applications such as filtration, storage or aeration.

Systems that collect or treat household wastewater for reuse must be approved by the EPA for use in Victoria and require a "septic tank permit" from Bayside City Council.

Managing the risks

- Never store untreated greywater for more than 24 hours.
- Make sure there is no cross connection between greywater reuse system and drinking water supply. You can colour code pipes and install a backflow prevention device to reduce the risk.
- Make sure the diversion system automatically diverts to sewer if the greywater system blocks or fails.
- During wet weather divert the greywater to sewer.
- ***Only divert water from shower, bath, handbasin and laundry rinse water.***
- **Do not** use kitchen wastewater that has a high level of contaminants.
- **Never** divert water that could have faecal contamination such as laundry water from soiled nappies etc.
- Reduce human exposure to greywater by sub surface irrigation.
- Always wash hands after gardening.
- Do not water vegetable gardens that have crops that will be eaten raw or undercooked.
- Never allow greywater to discharge beyond property boundaries.
- Only use greywater during prolonged warm/dry periods, and limit amount of water to meet plant water requirements.
- Never allow greywater to discharge to a drain or waterway.
- Never drink greywater or allow pets to drink greywater.
- Only irrigate with greywater if plants in the garden are healthy.
- Use low phosphorus detergents.
- Reduce fertiliser when using greywater.
- Do not allow soil to become saturate or allow greywater to pool.

If you have any further queries please contact Bayside City Council on the contact number listed below and discuss with the relevant department.

Corporate Centre

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Hours of business 8.30am – 5.00pm
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