

State of Oregon
Department of Environmental Quality

Memorandum

Date: Aug. 1, 2012

To: Environmental Quality Commission

From: Dick Pedersen, Director

Subject: Agenda item D, Informational item: Graywater Program update
Aug. 23-24, 2012, EQC meeting

Why this is important In August 2011, the commission adopted new rules for permitting of graywater reuse and disposal systems and requested a program update one year after rule adoption. This item provides an update to the commission on DEQ's new program for permitting graywater reuse and disposal systems.

Background and other information In June 2009, Oregon statute was amended and allowed the reuse of graywater, or domestic wastewater originating from showers and baths, bathroom sinks, kitchen sinks, and laundries, with a permit from DEQ. The statute directed the commission to adopt rules for permitting graywater reuse and disposal systems. Oregon Administrative Rules Chapter 340, Division 53, prescribe requirements for the reuse of graywater while protecting public health and the environment.

Key issues **Program development**
Following rule adoption, DEQ staff developed two general permits for graywater reuse and disposal systems, modified administrative processes for issuing permits, met with state and local public agencies with an interest in graywater and identified and trained DEQ regional staff on the program. DEQ began accepting permit applications for graywater reuse and disposal systems in April 2012.

DEQ updated its graywater program website with "Questions and Answers" on graywater reuse and disposal system permits and a technical guide, *Reusing Graywater in Your Landscape: A Guide for Oregon Homeowners*, that was developed with a Portland State University graduate student. The guide describes graywater, the benefits of using graywater, and a process for designing, installing, and permitting a graywater reuse and disposal system.

Public interest and DEQ outreach

Oregonians continue to express some interest in graywater use. When DEQ began accepting permit applications in April, newspapers across the state reported on the new graywater program. DEQ has received

calls statewide from individuals interested in the graywater program, although interest is generally less than had been expected. As of Aug. 1, 2012, DEQ received only four permit applications and issued coverage under a general permit to homeowners in Clackamas (1), Jackson (2) and Polk (1) Counties.

Active outreach on the graywater program has included press releases, presentations to local governments and interest groups, radio interviews, and community workshops. A joint DEQ and City of Ashland workshop held in June attracted approximately 90 persons interested in graywater reuse. Community partners at the workshop offering assistance to homeowners included building inspectors, a water conservation specialist, and the Jackson Soil and Water Conservation District. DEQ will participate in another community graywater workshop with the City of Portland and East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District on Aug. 23, 2012.

**Next steps and
commission
involvement**

DEQ will continue supporting communities and organizations interested in promoting the installation of graywater reuse and disposal systems for purposes of water conservation and water quality improvement. Outreach to communities with significant interest in graywater reuse will be provided as resources allow. DEQ will develop additional documents and tools, such as forms and worksheets, as needed to assist homeowners through the permit process, and will continue to update its program website. Annual reports forms for graywater general permits will be developed by Oct. 31, 2012.

Commission action is not requested at this time.

Attachments

None

**Available upon
request**

1. Questions and Answers: Permits for graywater reuse and disposal systems
2. Reusing Graywater in Your Landscape: A Guide for Oregon Homeowners

Approved:

Division: _____

Section: _____

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