



Greywater systems

For more information:
Call the hotline
1800 243 585

Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme

Greywater systems

Rebate available: 50% of purchase cost and installation up to \$200 for an above-ground greywater system, or \$500 towards the purchase and installation of a below-ground system

Greywater is wastewater from the bath, spa bath, shower, wash basins and laundry, which can be diverted for use on lawns and gardens. It does not include water from the kitchen, swimming pool or toilet, as this water would pose health and environmental risks.

Below-ground irrigation systems are preferable as they can be carefully designed to suit the soil and other conditions in your garden.

Legally using greywater in Queensland

As part of its ongoing management of water, the Queensland Government introduced new laws in March 2006 to broaden the use of greywater in the state. The following is a summary of legislation in the *Plumbing and Drainage Act 2002* (reprinted 10 August 2006) governing its use:

Single-dwelling residential properties

Anybody is allowed to manually bucket greywater from the laundry and bathroom, or to connect a flexible hose to divert it from the washing machine to the garden.

You can apply to the local council if you want to install more sophisticated systems such as a diverter unit or treatment plant. Such systems must be installed by a plumber licensed in Queensland and must meet Australian standards.

It is important that you understand and adhere to local council requirements before installing greywater systems as some properties are not suitable for this type of irrigation. The local council will consider whether requests for installation meet local environmental and safety concerns.

Multi-dwelling residential properties

The use of greywater in multi-dwelling properties is limited because of health and environmental concerns. The law permits manual bucketing of greywater on all properties, and permits use of a flexible hose attached to the washing machine in some, but not all, multi-dwelling residential properties.

What is included in the greywater rebate?

To encourage the use of greywater in the garden, the Queensland Government is offering rebate options for above-ground systems and below-ground systems. Residents can claim for either an above-ground greywater system or a below-ground greywater system, but not both.

Above-ground systems

There are two different above-ground greywater systems.

The first system is to simply attach a flexible hose to your clothes washing machine pump outlet:

- you can buy suitable flexible hoses at hardware suppliers and connect it yourself
- you do not require council approval.

The second system involves diverting water from your clothes washing machine, baths, showers and handbasins. To be eligible you must:

- obtain your local council approval before any work can be undertaken
- use a licensed plumber licensed in Queensland to change your existing plumbing.

Please refer to the *Terms and Conditions* for detailed information on the requirements under the Home and Garden WaterWise Rebate Schemes.

ISBN 978-1-7417-2334-2



9 781741 723342

Queensland the Smart State



Tips and safety essentials

- Don't let greywater come into contact with humans, as it can contain harmful pathogens.
- Don't use it to water children's play areas; don't let children play with or in it; and don't let their toys come in contact with it.
- Don't let pets drink greywater or track it through the house, as this can transmit germs and disease.
- Don't use it to water the edible parts of herbs, vegetables and fruit, and don't let it splash on them.
- Be selective in what plants you water with greywater, as it may damage some types (e.g. native plants).
- Don't keep using greywater in the same spot—interchange with fresh water if possible.
- Where possible, apply it under mulch or soil, as this will reduce both the risk of human contact and ponding.
- Remember, whatever goes down the drain and into the greywater will end up in the garden, so choose laundry detergents with low phosphorus, sodium and nitrogen content.

Below-ground systems

This system involves diverting water from your clothes washing machine, baths, showers and handbasins and distributing by a subsurface irrigation system. To be eligible you must:

- obtain your local council approval before any work can be undertaken
- use a plumber licensed in Queensland to change your existing plumbing.

Will I need a licensed plumber to install the system?

Apart from a system that consists of a flexible hose connected to the pump outlet of a clothes washing machine, all above-ground and below-ground greywater irrigation systems must be installed by a plumber licensed in Queensland. To qualify for the rebate, you will need to provide the invoice showing the plumber's details.

Why do you need a licensed plumber?

Householders cannot legally install below ground systems or change existing above-ground plumbing to divert water from clothes washing machines, baths, showers and handbasins. In these cases, if you do not use a plumber licensed in Queensland, you are ineligible for the rebate.

Plumbers licensed in Queensland must be able to provide you with a Licence Number, Registration Number, and be registered with the Building Services Authority (BSA) to carry out the installation.

Does a greywater system need council approval?

It is advisable to investigate your local council's requirements before making any decisions about installing a greywater system, as most do require council approval (except for the flexible hose method mentioned above).

Mandatory requirements

If the installation of a greywater system is a mandatory requirement under State or local legislation, you are not eligible for a rebate.

You should check with your local council to determine whether mandatory requirements exist.

Using greywater responsibly

As greywater contains significant quantities of bacteria, some of which may be disease-causing organisms, it is important that people and pets do not come into direct contact with it. It is also imperative to ensure that there is no risk of greywater connecting with drinking water.

The operator of the system should ensure that the greywater:

- does not run off onto neighbouring properties, or have a negative effect on them
- does not pollute drinking water or groundwater, or does not enter local watercourses
- does not enter swimming pools or water features
- does not form ponds
- does not cause odours
- is diverted to the property's approved sewerage system when immediate use is not possible (e.g. during rainy periods or when the garden is already sufficiently wet)
- piping is clearly labelled 'Warning: not for drinking'.

Please refer to the [Terms and Conditions](#) for detailed information on the requirements under the Home and Garden WaterWise Rebate Schemes.