



## **Alternate Water Systems and On-site Water Reuse Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Why is the City requiring Alternate Water Systems for certain types of new commercial nonresidential construction?**

The City's retail water use is expected to increase by 32% by 2045 due to population growth estimates, and the state is facing severe drought. City Council has prioritized efforts to accelerate on-site water reuse as a climate strategy to save water and meet challenging future demands. A co-benefit of alternate water systems is the just transition of local gas pipefitting work to support water conservation and resiliency. The Alternate Water Systems Ordinance only requires installation of separate additional piping (also known as "dual plumbing"). It does not require building owners to install on-site water reuse systems but will allow for future installation of systems.

### **What is the purpose of an alternate water system?**

An alternate water system allows for graywater (showers/ hand washing sinks) to be treated and reused for toilet and urinal flushing, and for subsurface irrigation.

### **Which projects does this requirement apply to?**

The Alternate Water Systems Ordinance applies the following requirements for new commercial nonresidential construction:

- New commercial nonresidential buildings 10,000 sf or greater must include a gray water system that can be utilized to provide subsurface irrigation.
- New commercial nonresidential buildings 50,000 square feet or greater must include installation of separate, additional piping system that can be utilized for an on-site treated nonpotable gray water system for water closets and urinals.

The Ordinance provides exceptions to the requirements listed above for the following:



- Buildings or parts of a building with a California Building Code, Chapter 3 R-2, R-2.1, R-3, R-3.1, or R-4 occupancy classification.
- Additions and improvements, including tenant improvements, in existing buildings as defined in the California Building Code.
- Child-care center; grocery store to be constructed in a food desert; mini storage, locker building; or warehouse, distribution center.

### **When does the Ordinance go into effect?**

The Alternate Water Systems Ordinance will go into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. Applicable projects with building permits filed on or after that date will need to comply with Ordinance requirements.

**What will “Phase Two” of the On-site Water Reuse Study cover?** On December 13, 2022, City Council adopted Resolution 2022-0402, which commits City Staff to:

- Study the costs, programmatic requirements for and impacts of onsite treatment of gray water or black water and reuse of that water in commercial nonresidential buildings over 50,000 square feet and nonresidential commercial district-scale projects with over 100,000 square feet of total area.
- Evaluate possible incentives for buildings that install alternate water and onsite treatment and reuse systems.
- Evaluate the potential costs and benefits of expanding water reuse requirements to large multi-unit residential construction.
- Evaluate the resources and staffing needs to implement an onsite water reuse program
- Bring forward recommendations in 2025.

### **My building is subject to the Alternate Water Systems Ordinance. Do I have to use recycled gray water to meet my irrigation, toilet, and urinal flushing needs?**

No, the Ordinance does NOT require building owners to meet their end use requirements (irrigation, toilet, and urinal flushing) with recycled water. The ordinance requires **installation** of gray water systems and separate additional piping (for applicable buildings). Building owners can decide if/when they want to use the systems.