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## **IRRIGATE USING LAUNDRY WATER WITH DO-IT-YOURSELF SYSTEM**

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Homeowners can learn how to legally irrigate their yards with used laundry water through a do-it-yourself system being introduced around Ventura County. The system allows homeowners to discharge so-called graywater from washing machines onto yards and plants, saving up to 8,000 gallons of fresh drinking water per year, building officials said.

"A person who is skilled with their hands, following our guidelines, could install this system without too much difficulty," said county Building Official Jim MacDonald. He said savings depending on the type of machine and usage. A top-loading machine uses 20-25 gallons of water per wash, while new front-loading machines use 10, MacDonald estimated.

The Ventura County Building and Safety Division will introduce a mock-up of the system and explain how to produce it at workshops in Ventura over the next couple months.

Previously, state building authorities required homeowners to get permits to dispose of laundry water through such a system. But the Building Standards Commission relaxed the rules in January for water disposed from washers at single-family homes.

Building officials from around Ventura County got together to design a plan and make a model to guide local residents, MacDonald said.

"It's acceptable for use in every city in the county," MacDonald said.

He estimated the cost of construction materials at \$140 to \$150. Once installed, the system should not require much maintenance, but homeowners should use biodegradable soap intended for graywater systems, he said.

The system is untested, but operates on the same principle as a septic system. The water is pumped out from the washing machine through pipes in the wall to perforated pipes buried below the surface in the yard. Then it seeps into the ground, MacDonald said.

"As long as gravity continues to work, this system will continue to work," the building official said.

Workshops will be offered in English from 3-4:30 p.m. April 30, May 5 and May 12. A session will be offered in Spanish at the same time May 21.

The presentations are scheduled in Room 311 at the Hall of Administration at the County Government Center, 800 S. Victoria Ave., Ventura.

Detailed plans and information are available at  
[http://www.ventura.org/rma/build\\_safe/special/graywater.html](http://www.ventura.org/rma/build_safe/special/graywater.html) or call 654-2771.