

Non-potable Water Program

The SFPUC recently updated its Non-potable Grant Program to encourage additional opportunities including breweries treating and reusing their process water onsite.

In September 2012, the City and County of San Francisco adopted the Onsite Water Reuse for Commercial, Multi-family, and Mixed Use Development Ordinance. Commonly known as the Non-potable Water Ordinance, it added Article 12C to the San Francisco Health Code, allowing for the collection, treatment, and use of alternate water sources for non-potable applications in individual buildings and at the district-scale.

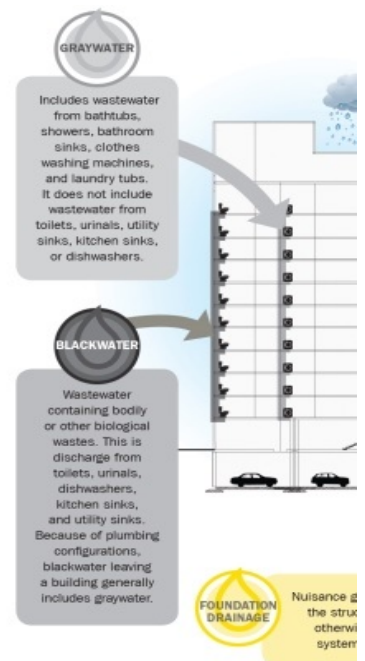
The SFPUC is working on state and national efforts to establish guidance and policy frameworks to help local jurisdictions overcome barriers for onsite water reuse. The National Blue Ribbon Commission was established to craft model state policy and develop resources to demonstrate how onsite non-potable water systems can help utilities meet One Water goals.

Do the requirements apply to my project?

In July 2015, Article 12C became a mandatory requirement for all new construction of 250,000 square feet or more of gross floor area. Article 12C requires the following:

- New development projects of 250,000 square feet or more of gross floor area that haven't received a site permit prior to November 1, 2016 are required to install and operate an onsite non-potable water system to treat and reuse available graywater, rainwater, and foundation drainage for toilet and urinal flushing and irrigation, and
- New development projects of 40,000 square feet or more of gross floor area are required to prepare water budget calculations assessing the amount of available rainwater, graywater, and foundation drainage, and the demands for toilet and urinal flushing and irrigation.

SEE this building schematic.



Development projects implementing district-scale non-potable water systems may seek an alternative compliance approach to Article 12C. Please review the Guidelines for Alternative Compliance for District-scale Non-potable Water Systems for more information.

How do I comply with the requirements?

Step 1: Submit a Water Budget Application to SFPUC

The Water Budget Applications and Water Use Calculators for single-building and district-scale non-potable water systems are located below. The Water Use Calculator must be completed and submitted with your project's Water Budget Application.

- Single-building Non-potable Water Budget Application
- Single-building Water Use Calculator
- District-scale Non-potable Water Budget Application
- District-scale Calculator

Step 2: Submit a Non-potable Implementation Plan to SFPUC (applicable only to district-scale systems)

Critical NP Program Information

- Single-building Water Budget Application
- District-scale Water Budget Application
- Checklist for Non-potable Implementation Plan
- Guidelines for Alternative Compliance for District-scale Non-potable Water Systems
- SFDPH Engineering Report
- Rules and Regulations
- Cross-Connection Requirements

Municipal Code:

Article 12C, San Francisco Health Code

Contact Info:

SFPUC NP Program

nonpotable@sfgwater.org
(415) 551-4734

SFDPH NP Program

dph.nonpotable@sfdph.org

The Non-potable Implementation Plan must be prepared in accordance with the following checklist.

SFPUC Cross-Connection Control Program

(650) 652-3199

DPW Encroachment Permits

(415) 554-5810

Plumbing Inspection Division

(415) 558-6570

Step 3: Submit an Engineering Report to SFDPH

The Engineering Report must be prepared by a registered professional engineer. Rainwater harvesting projects for non-spray irrigation, and foundation drainage or gray water projects for subsurface irrigation, do not need to submit an Engineering Report.

Step 4: Obtain Building Permits and Construct the Onsite Water System

SFDPH approval of the Engineering Report and a Plan Check by the Plumbing Inspection Division (PID) are required before PID will issue a plumbing permit. Please contact PID at (415) 558-6570 with questions about the required Plan Check.

Step 5: Obtain Encroachment Permits from SFPW (if applicable)

Non-potable water systems with infrastructure located within the public right-of-way are required to obtain an Encroachment Permit from the San Francisco Public Works Department (SFPW).

Step 6: Schedule a Cross-connection Test

Non-potable water systems must include the required level of backflow protection as set forth by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission Cross-Connection Control Program. Please see Required Levels of Backflow Protection for Non-potable Water Systems.

Step 7: Obtain a Permit to Operate from SFDPH

A Construction Certification letter and successful Cross Connection test are required prior to operation. Rainwater harvesting projects for non-spray irrigation, and foundation drainage or graywater projects for subsurface irrigation, do not need to obtain a Permit to Operate.

Step 8: Conduct Ongoing Monitoring, Reporting, and Inspections

Ongoing monitoring is crucial to ensure the onsite water system is in proper working order. Operators report the results of the ongoing monitoring to SFDPH using the Discharge Monitoring Report form at the frequency identified in their Permit to Operate.

Capacity Charges and Excess Use Charges

Effective February 1, 2017, customers with onsite non-potable water systems may receive an adjusted water and wastewater capacity charge. This adjustment will accurately assess capacity charges for buildings with onsite non-potable water systems by charging new users only for the demand placed on SFPUC water and wastewater systems.

Additionally, the SFPUC is currently implementing a Water Use Allocation Program and excess use charges for new development projects required to comply with Article 12C. Projects will be assigned monthly water use allocations based on the project's approved Water Budget Application. Any amount of potable water used in excess of the monthly allocation is subject to excess use charges and will be billed at a rate equal to 300% (3x) the applicable water and wastewater rates.

Non-potable Grant Program

The SFPUC Non-potable Grant Program is accepting applications. To apply, please download the grant application and submit it to nonpotable@sflower.org.

Additional Resources

SFDPH Non-potable Program Website

NP Program Guidebook

NP Program Factsheet

NP Program Grant Application

NP Program FAQs

CCSF Certified Backflow Testers

Blueprint for Onsite Water Systems

Case Studies of San Francisco Non-potable Water Projects

Implementing OneWaterSF: Onsite Reuse Factsheet (new!)

Synergies for Compliance with the NPO and SMO Guidebook

Submittal Requirements for Projects Subject to the SMO and NPO

Non-potable Water System Resources List

Validated UV List

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