

# Condensate Disposal Requirements



A drywell.

This bulletin describes the condensate discharge requirements for air-conditioning units in residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. Please note that code requirements evolve over time; always check the current Building, Plumbing and/or Mechanical codes or ask an Inspector to verify requirements.

## RESIDENTIAL DRYWELL REQUIREMENTS

Condensate discharge for residential air-conditioning units is typically terminated in a drywell. Requirements for drywells for condensate disposal are as follows:

1. Minimum size: 2-foot square by 2-foot deep.
2. Placement: The nearest edge of the drywell must be at least 3 feet from any structure or building foundation.
3. Fill: Fill with 1 inch-sized gravel or crushed rock.
4. Covering: Cover the top of the drywell with building paper or plastic sheeting, then add 6 inches of earth or concrete.
5. Drainpipe connection: A minimum 3/4-inch condensate pipe from the cooling coil must indirectly connect to a minimum 1 1/2-inch drainpipe. The indirect connection must be made by an air break at the edge of the foundation.

**Attics or Furred Spaces.** When a cooling coil is located in an attic or furred space where damage could occur from a clogged primary condensate drainpipe, a secondary condensate drainpipe must be installed and terminate in a readily observable location, such as over a window or door.

## COMMERCIAL / INDUSTRIAL REQUIREMENTS

Terminating condensate discharge from commercial and industrial air-conditioning units must follow these specifications:

1. Trap and vent the air-conditioning condensate drains per the conditions of the listing of the equipment and in accordance with the requirements of the Uniform Mechanical Code.
2. Terminate the condensate using one of the following methods:
  - To a landscaped area properly designed to accommodate the volume of condensate.
  - To a properly-designed stormwater treatment system, e.g., a bio-retention unit.
  - Indirectly to the sanitary sewer, subject to all wastewater permitting requirements and fees. Contact the Environmental Services Department at 408-793-5300.
  - If none of the above methods is feasible, the City Building Division may allow an indirect discharge of condensate to the storm drain system. Indirect connections must be outside the building. The condensate drain line must be hard piped to the storm drain. Terminating the condensate to a parking lot or roof surface is not allowed.

### BUILDING INFORMATION INSPECTOR

Email or leave a message with your questions about codes, plan reviews, or the inspection process. We strive to respond within 2 business days:

[infoinspector@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:infoinspector@sanjoseca.gov)  
408-535-7641

### FIELD COORDINATOR

If you have an active permit, you can get help from your Field Coordinator. Find their direct phone number on your permit card, inspection notice, or the [Field Coordination Areas Map](#).

### Development Services Permit Center

San José City Hall  
200 E. Santa Clara St.  
San José, CA 95113  
408-535-3555

[www.sanjoseca.gov/permitcenter](http://www.sanjoseca.gov/permitcenter)