

DRAINAGE ACROSS LOT/PROPERTY LINE

The Los Angeles Building Code's (LABC) purpose as specified in Sec. 101.2, is to safeguard life, limb, health, property and public welfare by regulating and controlling the design, construction, quality of materials, use, occupancy, location, and maintenance of all buildings and structures erected (or to be erected), and by regulating grading operations within the City of Los Angeles.

Sections 7013.9 and 7013.10 of the LABC require roof drainage from new construction and site drainage from graded pads to be conducted to the street, natural watercourse or an approved drainage facility. Such facilities commonly consist of sump pumps, dispersal walls (Information Bulletin P/BC 2020-103 and LABC- Chapter 70, Figure F), and storm water infiltration.

When the water is not conducted to the street or infiltrated, cross-lot drainage may be a possible option.

Because the LABC does not contain regulations specific to cross-lot drainage, the guidelines in this bulletin were established to ensure uniformity in the Department's review of site development relative to cross-lot drainage, and are consistent with decisions rendered in court cases.

Up-stream property owner/s are allowed to discharge surface water from their land in a manner consistent with how flow would naturally occur. However, the natural flow of water shall not be interfered with or create conditions such that, discharge on to neighboring land/s is greater in quantity or different than that which would occur naturally. Similarly, downstream property owner/s shall not alter grades or construct structures that impede the flow of water across a property boundary or boundaries from continuing as it would have, prior to grading or construction. A drainage system to capture and convey water to an approved location shall be established, where construction of walls or changes in ground surface elevation/s will result in the blocking, ponding or diversion of water.

The use of dispersal walls to convert concentrated drainage to sheet-flow or the use of a sump pump, as a result of new construction or site alteration, requires a departmental administrative approval. The pattern of drainage across property lines shall remain essentially unchanged.

A drainage easement from adjoining downstream property owners is required whenever drainage crossing a property line has been altered and involves the use of pipes, channels, culverts, v-drains, etc., to conduct water to an approved location.

When a drainage easement is required, a Covenant and Agreement with the notarized signatures from all owner/s of the pertinent properties along with the legal description, of the easement, done by a licensed surveyor shall be recorded with the Los Angeles County Records Office.

Whenever a project involves cross-lot drainage, a licensed survey map shall be provided to show the drainage pattern of the subject, relevant adjoining lots and the presence of any property line walls.