LESS LAWN MORE OPPORTUNITY

Fact Sheet: New Rules, New Opportunities for Landscaping Companies

California law (AB 1572) will soon prohibit the use of drinking water to irrigate nonfunctional lawn on most commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) properties — including common areas managed by homeowner associations (HOAs). From innovative installation and irrigation upgrades to strategies for protecting and preserving trees during the transition, the new requirements open up fresh avenues for skilled landscape professionals.

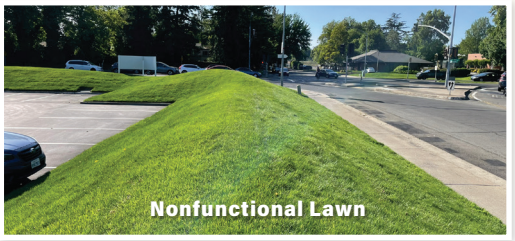


Lavender *Lavandula spp.*

This fact sheet explains what's changing and how to prepare.



Functional Lawn



Nonfunctional Lawn

WHAT IS NONFUNCTIONAL LAWN?

Nonfunctional lawn refers to irrigated lawn that is purely ornamental and not regularly used for recreation or public gatherings. If the landscaper is the only person who ever walks on the lawn; it's likely nonfunctional.

- Narrow lawn strips in or around parking lots
- Decorative lawn along sidewalks, building edges, or fences
- Lawn between buildings with no seating, access, or activity
- Lawn in medians, roundabouts, or entry signage zones
- Sloped or oddly-shaped areas that are hard to use or water efficiently

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR LANDSCAPE COMPANIES

Landscapers are often the first to spot nonfunctional lawn, making them uniquely positioned to turn routine visits into new business and tap growing demand for water-wise upgrades.

- Design services for water-wise landscape transformations
- Installation of water-wise landscape and irrigation solutions
- Maintenance services that promote plant health, water efficiency, and client loyalty
- Environmental and community impact that builds trust

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T COMPLY?

Failure to comply with AB 1572's nonfunctional lawn irrigation restrictions can result in civil penalties of up to $1,000 per day (California Water Code §1846). Enforcement specifics may vary; please get in touch with your local water provider for details.

COMPLIANCE TIMELINE

January 1, 2027
Public properties owned or managed by local governments

January 1, 2028
Commercial, industrial, and institutional properties

January 1, 2029
Common areas managed by homeowner associations, common interest developments, and community service organizations

January 1, 2031
Public properties in Disadvantaged Communities, contingent upon available state financial assistance

Note: Your customers are not required to replace lawn by these dates—only to stop irrigating with potable water

Learn more about nonfunctional turf:
www.mwdoc.com/nonfunctionalturf

IDEAS FOR A BEAUTIFUL, WATER-WISE LANDSCAPE

Many properties are using this transition to create colorful spaces that use less water and serve more purposes. Ideas include:



Native and low-water plants with seasonal color



Shade trees and flowering shrubs



Photo by Sonoma Academy

Paths, benches, and gathering areas



Photo by Christine Kohn

Grass-mimicking groundcover



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR LANDSCAPERS

Free and low-cost training programs are available to help landscapers build the skills needed to meet rising demand for water-wise landscape solutions.

California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA): Offering a Landscape Industry Certified Technician program as well as free online training videos and webinars. **clca.org**

EPA WaterSense Partnership: Gives your business national exposure through the EPA's online directory, along with access to trusted branding, promotional materials, and a network of peers committed to water efficiency. **epa.gov/watersense**

Irrigation Association: Offers professional certifications for irrigation auditors, designers, and contractors to ensure efficient and effective water management practices. **irrigation.org**

International Society of Arboriculture: Certifies tree care professionals to ensure they are trained in protecting existing trees during landscape conversions and providing appropriate tree health care. **isa-arbor.com**

Qualified Water Efficient Landscaper (QWEL): Free or low-cost certification in irrigation and water management with bilingual training and online professional listings. **qwel.net**

Water Efficient Landscape Dual Certification Program: Southern California landscape professionals can now earn two industry-recognized certifications, at no cost, through a new program from Metropolitan Water District and CLCA that supports lawn transformation and promotes water-wise landscaping. **bewaterwise.com/weldcp**

MWDOC is here to help!

The Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC) offers rebates. Helping your customers access lawn transformation and irrigation equipment rebates can be the key to turning a potential project into a signed contract.

Discover rebates to replace a nonfunctional lawn with a sustainable landscape!

www.mwdoc.com/commercialrebates

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