LESS LAWN MORE EFFICIENCY

Fact Sheet: New Rules for Watering Lawns in California

California law (AB 1572) will soon prohibit the use of potable (drinking) water to irrigate nonfunctional turfgrass that serves no recreational or community purpose—at most municipal, government, commercial, industrial, and institutional (CII) properties, including common areas managed by homeowner associations (HOAs).

These new rules provide an opportunity to create welcoming new spaces that showcase the beauty of low-water and native plants, highlight your commitment to a sustainable future, and provide a vision for others in your community to follow. They also work in tandem with California's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, which sets standards for water-wise landscape design for projects of a certain square footage.

By taking early action, you can reduce water use and showcase the way forward for local businesses, HOAs, landscape designers, and the community at large.



Toyon *Heteromeles arbutifolia, California native*

This fact sheet explains what is changing and how to prepare.





WHAT IS NONFUNCTIONAL TURFGRASS?

Nonfunctional turfgrass refers to irrigated lawn that is purely ornamental and not regularly used for recreation or public gatherings.

Examples include:

- Narrow lawn strips in or around parking lots
- Decorative lawn along sidewalks, buildings, 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

WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU DON'T COMPLY?

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



BY JANUARY 1, 2027:

Public properties owned or managed by local governments—including city and county buildings, libraries, fire and police stations, courthouses, streets and highways, and public utilities—must stop watering nonfunctional turfgrass.

BY JANUARY 1, 2030:

Public properties must self-certify compliance to the State Water Board. Self-certification must continue every 3 years through 2039.

CREATE A VISION OF A NEW SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

Many cities and counties are using this as an opportunity to transform their public properties and create colorful, sustainable, water-wise landscapes that establish a striking and memorable visual idenity at their public properties and inspire residents to do the same.

Show Off Your Local Roots:

- Create landscapes filled with water-wise plants native to this region.
- Plant gardens that provide sustenance and shelter for native pollinators, birds, butterflies, and bees.
- Add shade trees that help cool buildings and sidewalks.
- Develop demonstration gardens that incorporate features such as stormwater capture, bioswales, recycled water, high-efficiency irrigation systems, and informational signage.

MWDOC AND YOUR WATER PROVIDER ARE HERE TO HELP

- Lawn replacement and irrigation rebates
- Sample plant lists
- Tree protection tips and irrigation strategies

OCWaterSmart.com



Irvine Valley College

- Over 34,000 square feet of turfgrass converted to OC friendly plants
- Planted 119 trees
- Installed high-efficiency drip irrigation
- Created beautiful student spaces



Fountain Valley Public Works Yard

- Over 3,000 square feet of turfgrass converted to drought-tolerant landscaping
- Installed a dry riverbed to capture rainwater and reduce stormwater runoff
- Added a personalized landscape element

Learn about Nonfunctional Turf:
mwdoc.com/NFT

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