



Overview of Water Use Efficiency Requirements

for all development (except single-family lots), including but not limited to: multi-family, subdivisions, public, commercial, institutional, and industrial development

PURPOSE

Water resources in our area are limited. The Soquel Creek Water District (SCWD) relies entirely on local groundwater aquifers to provide water for approximately 45,000 people in the mid-county region. Currently, more water is being pumped out of the aquifers than is being replaced by natural precipitation. Water availability and quality can be affected by overpumping. Water use efficiency requirements were developed to protect our groundwater supplies from over pumping and to promote efficient usage of our limited water resources. The requirements address both interior and exterior water use.

This summary sheet provides an overview of the process. **Another SCWD document provides forms that must be completed and submitted as a condition of receiving water service.**

APPLICABILITY

The requirements apply to subdivisions, planned unit developments and projects with designated open spaces and landscaped areas other than single-family lot development. Single-family lots are required to adhere to different requirements. Existing customers are exempt unless they are requesting an increase in meter size or a new meter.

Ecological restoration projects and mined-land reclamation projects that do not require a permanent irrigation system, cemeteries, and registered historical sites that have a previous or

current landscape style are exempt. Community gardens will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine applicable requirements. Upon SCWD approval, schoolyards, parks, playgrounds, sports fields, and golf courses may be exempt from the turf restrictions only.

The SCWD will consider, and may allow, substituting of well-designed landscape alternatives or innovations that may equally reduce water consumption. All written explanations, variances, substitutions, alternatives or innovations must be reviewed and approved by the SCWD before water service is granted.

THE PROCESS

The applicant requesting a “Will Serve” letter receives the Water Use Efficiency Requirements as part of the “Will Serve” package. The applicant must abide by the SCWD’s requirements and submit completed forms as a condition of receiving water service.

The SCWD normally receives the landscape plans from Santa Cruz County and/or the City of Capitola as a part of the permitting process for minor land divisions, multi-family developments, commercial developments and public projects. If such plans are not submitted to the County of Santa Cruz or the City of Capitola, then the landscape plans should be submitted directly to the SCWD.

WHAT IS REQUIRED?

An applicant must complete and sign the checklists in the document titled “*Water Use Efficiency Requirements for subdivisions, planned unit developments, and projects with designated open spaces and landscaped areas other than single-family dwelling lots.*” Both the interior and exterior water-use protocols require applicants’ signatures certifying that the project conforms to the SCWD’s conditions.

1. Interior Requirements Summary

Most requirements reinforce State and Federal laws (e.g., 2.5 gpm showerheads, faucets 2.2 gpm, etc.). The two exceptions where SCWD’s requirements exceed other regulatory protocols are **that toilets must be high-efficiency models and flush on average 1.28 gpf or less** and that newly purchased clothes washing machines must be Energy Star Certified and have a “water factor” of 8.5 gallons or less (uses 8.5 or less gallons of water per cubic foot wash load).

2. Exterior Requirements Summary

The exterior or landscape requirements use the State’s Landscape Model Ordinance as a blueprint and are similar to what the County of Santa Cruz and the City of Capitola require.

The exterior requirements address:

- Irrigation Design and Scheduling
- Plant Types
- Soil Preparation and Mulching
- Grading

3. Inspection

Once the interior and exterior requirements are met, return the completed checklists to the SCWD office. In some cases, an inspection may be made during mulching or installation of the irrigation system.

4. Maintenance

The exterior landscape portion should be maintained in good condition and watered according to appropriate irrigation schedules and seasonal variation. The SCWD may monitor the annual water usage at the site and require adjustments to be made if water use exceeds the landscape water budgets.

SUBMITTIAL TIMING

The SCWD’s *Water Use Efficiency Requirements* must be submitted prior to receiving approval for water service. Water service may be withheld until the requirements are met. Completed documentation must be submitted to SCWD at least two weeks before final approval is granted.

REVIEW FEE

There are no separate District fees for reviewing and approving the *Water Use Efficiency Requirements*.

REBATES

Please investigate the various rebates that SCWD and PGE offer for water and energy efficient devices for new development.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Call the SCWD Water Conservation Office at (831) 475-8500.