

Overview of the Soquel Creek Water District Water Use Efficiency Requirements for Tier I Single-Family Residences

(Tier I = Single-Family residential parcels sized less than 10,000 square feet)

PURPOSE

The Soquel Creek Water District (SqCWD) relies entirely on local groundwater aquifers to provide water for approximately 40,000 people in the mid-county region. Currently, more water is being pumped out of the aquifers than is being replaced by precipitation. This “overdrafting” may reduce future water availability and quality due to seawater intrusion. Indoor and outdoor water use efficiency requirements were developed and are periodically updated to protect our groundwater supplies from over-pumping and to promote efficient usage of our limited water resources.

This summary sheet provides an overview of some of the key requirements as derived from District Indoor & Outdoor Ordinances 16-02 and 16-03.

WHO MUST COMPLY?

- 1) All new and existing Tier I (parcels sized less than 10,000 square feet) single-family homes requesting new or expanded water service.
- 2) Existing Tier I single-family homes that:
 - a) Are required to apply for a building permit, plan check or design review for a bathroom or kitchen remodel, except that the indoor efficiency requirements will only apply to the fixtures normally included in the kitchen and/or bathroom to be remodeled. This is only applicable if the local land use planning agency is not requiring and enforcing it.
 - b) Are required to rehabilitate or modify their landscape as part of a land use approval/design review process, except that the outdoor efficiency requirements will only apply to the portion of the landscape to be rehabilitated or modified.

(Note: Single-family residences on parcels sized equal to or greater than 10,000 square feet are classified as Tier II and must meet more extensive outdoor/landscape requirements.)

The SqCWD will consider, and may allow, substituting well-designed alternatives or innovations that may equally reduce water consumption. All written explanations, variances, substitutions, alternatives or innovations must be reviewed and approved by the SqCWD.

WHAT IS REQUIRED and WHEN?

The key indoor and outdoor efficiency requirements are outlined below. The associated Indoor and Outdoor Water Use Efficiency Checklist provides a complete list of the requirements and is required to be reviewed, signed, and provided back to the District. The responsible party must agree to the requirements as a condition for obtaining new water service, or in the case of existing customers, receiving continued water service.

It is important to note that several of the below requirements may be more strict than those required by the County and the City of Capitola.

Indoor Requirements

- All installed toilets use 1.28 gallons per flush or less.
- All kitchen faucets use a maximum of 1.8 gallons per minute.
- All bathroom faucets use a maximum of 1.5 gallons per minute, or are WaterSense qualified.
- All installed showerheads use a maximum of 2.0 gallons per minute, or are WaterSense qualified.
- All clothes washing machines are Energy Star qualified.
- All dishwashing machines are Energy Star qualified.

Outdoor Requirements

- Turf, moderate to high water use plants and water features (including swimming pools) are limited to no more than 25% of the landscaped area.
- Turf must be a water conserving species and may not be used in areas less than 10 feet wide or on slopes greater than 12%.
- An annual water budget must be calculated using a simple formula provided in the Outdoor Efficiency Checklist and usage should not exceed the budget.
- Low-volume irrigation must be used on all non-turf areas.
- Overhead irrigation is not permitted within 24 inches of any non-permeable surface.
- All irrigation must be designed to avoid runoff and over-spray.
- Plants having similar water requirements must be grouped together in hydrozones and irrigated by separate irrigation circuits.
- Water in decorative pools, ponds, fountains and other water features must be recirculated, and automatic-fill valves may not be used.
- Covers are required for swimming pools and spas.
- Soil conditioning must include six cubic yards of organic amendment for each 1,000 square feet of topsoil to help retain soil moisture.
- Three inches of mulch are required in non-turf areas to minimize evaporation.

TO GET MORE INFORMATION

Call the Soquel Creek Water District at (831) 475-8501, ext. 156.