

Overview of the Soquel Creek Water District Water Use Efficiency Requirements for Tier II Single-Family Residential, Multi-Family Residential, Commercial, Industrial & Public Development

(Tier II = Single-Family residential parcels sized equal to or greater 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 affect future water availability as well as water 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 the key requirements as derived from District Indoor & Outdoor Ordinances 16-02 and 16-03.

WHO MUST COMPLY?

- 1) The requirements apply to all new and existing development of the following types that request new or expanded water service:
 - Tier II (parcels sized equal to or greater than 10,000 square feet) single-family homes;
 - All multi-family homes (three or more dwelling units); and
 - All commercial, industrial and public development.

- 2) The requirements also apply to existing development types listed above that:
 - 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 not required and enforced by the local land use planning agency.
 - 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.
 - Have landscapes that are equal to or greater than one acre in size. (Note: These landscapes are only subject to select provisions requiring compliance with a District-issued water budget).

New recreation areas including schoolyards, parks, playgrounds, sports fields and golf courses are subject to the outdoor requirements, with the exception of turf area limits, provided that recycled water, graywater and/or rainwater use is implemented where feasible. New community gardens will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to determine applicable requirements. New residential fruit and/or vegetable gardens are exempt from the high water use plant area limits.

The SqCWD will consider, and may allow, substituting of 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 Checklists provide a complete list of the requirements and are 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 are probably 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 installed urinals use 0.5 gallons per flush or less.
- All kitchen faucets use a maximum of 1.8 gallons per minute.
- All residential bathroom faucets use a maximum of 1.5 gallons per minute, or are WaterSense qualified. All non-residential faucets use a maximum of 0.5 gallons per minute or 0.20 gallons per cycle for metering faucets.
- 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.
- Separate meters are required for each multi-family residential unit and each non-residential unit.

Requirements also apply to the following types of non-residential equipment: Cooling towers, food steamers, ice machines, pre-rinse spray valves, automatic vehicle wash facilities and commercial refrigeration. Please refer to the Indoor Water Use Efficiency Checklist or the Indoor Ordinance for details.

Outdoor Requirements

- Turf, moderate to high water use plants and water features 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%.
- Dedicated landscape water meters are required for all multi-family residential, commercial, industrial and public development projects. Private irrigation submeters are recommended for Tier II Single-Family development.
- An annual water budget must be calculated using the formula provided in the Landscape Project Application Package and usage may 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.
- Irrigation systems must meet or exceed an average landscape irrigation efficiency of 75% for spray systems and 81% for drip systems.
- All irrigation must be designed to avoid runoff and over-spray.

Outdoor Requirements, Continued

- Automatic, self-adjusting controllers (i.e., weather or sensor-based) must be used for irrigation scheduling.
- Sensors that suspend or alter irrigation during unfavorable weather are required on all irrigation systems.
- 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.