

California Updates Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance



Source: www.TurfMagazine.com

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The [California Water Commission](#) recently approved an updated [Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance](#) that establishes increases in water efficiency standards for new and retrofitted landscapes. The updated model ordinance calls for more efficient irrigation systems, greywater usage and onsite stormwater capture, as well as limits on the portion of landscapes that may be covered in turf.

The landscape restrictions in the updated model ordinance apply to any new construction project with an aggregate landscape area equal to or greater than 500 square feet and rehabilitated landscape projects with an aggregate landscape area equal to or greater than 2,500 square feet requiring a building or landscape permit, plan check or design review.

In addition, all cities and counties are required to either adopt the updated the model ordinance or adopt a customized local water efficient landscape ordinance that is at least as effective in conserving water as the updated model ordinance by Dec. 1. If agencies do not take either of these actions, the model ordinance will automatically go into effect and apply.

As an alternative, the model ordinance encourages the adoption of regional water efficient landscape ordinances by two or more local agencies to implement a consistent set of landscape provisions throughout a geographical region. Local agencies that plan to adopt regional ordinances have until Feb. 1 to do so, or the model ordinance will automatically go into effect.

Cities and counties will also be required to report to the department by Dec. 31 on the adoption of their updated ordinances. Agencies adopting a regional ordinance, however, are not required to report on the adoption of their new ordinances until March 1. All agencies would thereafter be required to comply with annual reporting requirements on the implementation and enforcement of

their updated local water-efficient landscape ordinances.

The current revisions to the model ordinance were made in response to Gov. Jerry Brown's April 1 Executive Order declaring a statewide water shortage emergency. In addition to directing the [State Water Resources Control Board](#) to develop restrictions to achieve a 25 percent reduction in urban potable water use throughout California, the Executive Order called for the department to update the model ordinance through expedited regulation.