



HOW TO DEVELOP USING THE WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE ORDINANCE

Contra Costa County's [Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance \(Link\)](#) is the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance adopted by the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), as may be amended from time to time and as amended by the changes, additions, and deletions set forth in the County's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance. The MWELO may be accessed on the [DWR MWELO website \(Link\)](#).

Applicability: This ordinance applies to all of the following landscape projects:

1. *New construction projects* with an aggregate landscape area equal to or greater than 500 square feet requiring a building or landscape permit, plan check or design review;
2. *Rehabilitated landscapes 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;
3. *Existing landscapes* limited to Sections 493 (Provisions for existing landscapes), 493.1 (Irrigation audit, irrigation survey and irrigation water use analysis) and 493.2 (Water waste prevention); and
4. *Cemeteries*. Recognizing the special landscape management needs of cemeteries, new and rehabilitated cemeteries are limited to Sections 492.4, 492.11, and 492.12; and existing cemeteries are limited to Sections 493, 493.1, and 493.2.

How to Apply for your Water Efficient Landscape Application Review:

1. Submit a **General Planning** application, as [detailed on our website \(Link\)](#). For assistance, call the Application Permit Center at (925) 655-2700 or email PlanningIntake@dcd.cccounty.us.
2. The application submittal should include the following:
 - a. Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance Application Check List (Attached)
 - b. Water efficient landscape worksheet (Attached)
 - c. Landscape Design Plan (PDF minimum size 11" x 17")
 - d. Irrigation Design Plan (PDF minimum size 11" x 17")
 - e. Grading Plan (PDF minimum size 11" x 17")
 - f. Soil Management Report. Unless significant mass grading is planned, submit soil analysis report together with the items above. If significant grading is planned, the analysis will be submitted with Part II - Certificate of Completion, following project implementation.
 - g. [Property Owner Authorization \(Link\)](#) and [Important Notice to Applicants and Owners \(Link\)](#). If Assessor information does not reflect the current owner, a copy of the recorded deed will be required to verify ownership.
3. A deposit of \$1,500 is required at time of submittal. Once the General Planning screening application is submitted, an Application Intake Planner will contact you for payment of the deposit. Additional fees based on time and materials will be charged if staff costs exceed the base deposit.

If this ordinance is applicable to your project, a building permit cannot be applied for until the Landscaping Application has been completed, reviewed, and approved by Planning.

Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance Application Checklist

- _____ 1. Water Efficient Landscape Worksheet
- _____ 2. Landscape Design Plan
- _____ 3. Irrigation Design Plan
- _____ 4. Grading Plan
- _____ 5. Soil Management Report *

*Unless significant mass grading is planned, submit soil analysis report together with the items above. If significant grading is planned, the analysis will be submitted with Part II - Certificate of Completion, following project implementation.

Certification Statement:

I/We certify that the landscape plans for the above-listed project comply with the Landscape Design Standards and requirements for the County Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance.

PRINT NAME – PROPERTY OWNER

SIGNATURE – PROPERTY OWNER DATE

PRINT NAME
CERTIFIED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER,
CERTIFIED IRRIGATION DESIGNER

SIGNATURE DATE
CERTIFIED LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER,
CERTIFIED IRRIGATION DESIGNER

Appendix B –Water Efficient Landscape Worksheet.

WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPE WORKSHEET

This worksheet is filled out by the project applicant and it is a required element of the Landscape Documentation Package.

Reference Evapotranspiration (ETo) _____

Hydrozone # /Planting Description ^a	Plant Factor (PF)	Irrigation Method ^b	Irrigation Efficiency (IE) ^c	ETAF (PF/IE)	Landscape Area (sq. ft.)	ETAF x Area	Estimated Total Water Use (ETWU) ^d
Regular Landscape Areas							
				Totals	(A)	(B)	
Special Landscape Areas							
				1			
				1			
				1			
				Totals	(C)	(D)	
				ETWU Total			
				Maximum Allowed Water Allowance (MAWA)^e			

^a**Hydrozone #/Planting Description**
 E.g
 1.) front lawn
 2.) low water use plantings
 3.) medium water use planting

^b**Irrigation Method**
 overhead spray
 or drip

^c**Irrigation Efficiency**
 0.75 for spray head
 0.81 for drip

^d**ETWU (Annual Gallons Required) =**
 $Eto \times 0.62 \times ETAF \times Area$
 where 0.62 is a conversion factor that converts acre-inches per acre per year to gallons per square foot per year.

^e**MAWA (Annual Gallons Allowed) =** $(Eto) (0.62) [(ETAF \times LA) + ((1-ETAF) \times SLA)]$
 where 0.62 is a conversion factor that converts acre-inches per acre per year to gallons per square foot per year, LA is the total landscape area in square feet, SLA is the total special landscape area in square feet, and ETAF is .55 for residential areas and 0.45 for non-residential areas.

ETAF Calculations

Regular Landscape Areas

Total ETAF x Area	(B)
Total Area	(A)
Average ETAF	B ÷ A

Average ETAF for Regular Landscape Areas must be 0.55 or below for residential areas, and 0.45 or below for non-residential areas.

All Landscape Areas

Total ETAF x Area	(B+D)
Total Area	(A+C)
Sitewide ETAF	(B+D) ÷ (A+C)