

# Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance (MWELo)

## 2015 Ordinance Applicability Guide

### What is MWELo?

The state of California is in a severe drought and landscape irrigation accounts for almost half of our urban water use. The Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance (MWELo) was established in response to the constraint on our water supply to increase efficiency standards and salvage this resource.

### What does this mean for me?

Depending on the type of landscape you currently have or plan to have, you may be subject to MWELo requirements enforced by your local water agency or purveyor.

### How do I know if I need to follow MWELo standards?

If you are pursuing a project associated with landscape subject to Planning Department review and/or subject to a city permit, MWELo may be applicable. Other exceptions and restrictions may apply. Follow the guide below to find out if your landscape meets the parameters of the MWELo requirements.

The following cities are subject to additional requirements. Contact your city for further details.

- [Fremont](#)
- [Hayward](#)

### Step 1: Basic Applicability

Yes No

Is this a new construction with <b>landscape area</b> greater than or equal to 500 square feet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is this an existing property with a <b>new landscape area</b> greater than or equal to 500 square feet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is this a <b>rehabilitated (re-landscaping or replacement) landscape project</b> greater than or equal to 2500 square feet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you checked **yes** to any of the above boxes, proceed to Step 2. If you checked **no** to all, MWELo does **NOT APPLY**

### Step 2: Exceptions to Applicability

Yes No

Is the landscape area a registered <b>historical site</b> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the landscape area an <b>ecological restoration project</b> that does not require a permanent irrigation system site?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the landscape area a part of a <b>botanical garden</b> or <b>arboretum</b> open to the general public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you checked **no** to all of the above, proceed to Step 3. If you checked **yes** any of the boxes, MWELo does **NOT APPLY**

### Step 3: Limited Applicability

Yes No

Is the landscape area a cemetery?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the landscape area a <b>Special Landscape Area</b> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the landscape area an <b>existing landscape</b> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the landscape area a new landscape <b>500 to 2500 square feet</b> ?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the landscape area <b>less than 2500 square feet</b> and using <b>graywater</b> or <b>rainwater</b> to meet the landscape water needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you checked **yes** to any of the above, you may be subject to limited ordinance management and reporting. Check with local agency. If checked **no** to all of the above, you are subject to MWELo compliance.

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Glossary	
<b>MWELo</b>	Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance
<b>Existing Landscape</b>	Landscape over one acre in size installed before December 1 2015
<b>New Landscape</b>	A new building or new development with associated landscaping that is subject to Planning Department review and/or subject to a city permit
<b>Rehabilitated Landscape</b>	Projects associated with re-landscaping or replacement landscaping subject to Planning Department review and/or subject to a city permit
<b>Landscape Area</b>	Planting areas, turf areas, and water features in a landscape design plan subject to the water allowance calculated through the ordinance [visit CA Water Resource website for equation to calculate water allowance]. The landscape area does not include footprints of buildings or structures, sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, decks, patios, gravel or non-development (e.g. open spaces and existing native vegetation).
<b>Landscape Project</b>	Total area of landscape in a project as defined by the "landscape area"
<b>Historical Site</b>	An official location where pieces of political, military, cultural or social history have been preserved due to their cultural heritage value
<b>Ecological Restoration Project</b>	Projects where the site is intentionally altered to establish a defined, indigenous, historic ecosystem
<b>Botanical Garden/Arboretum</b>	Establishments where plants are grown for display to the public and often for scientific study
<b>Special Landscape Area</b>	Areas of the landscape dedicated solely to edible plants, recreational areas, areas irrigated with recycled water, or water features using recycled water
<b>Graywater</b>	Untreated wastewater that has not been contaminated by bodily waste (ex. Wastewater from clothes washers)
<b>Rainwater</b>	Water harvested from rain

### For more information on the Model Water Efficiency Irrigation Ordinance:

- Visit the CA Department of Water Resources:  
[www.water.ca.gov/wateruseefficiency/landscapeordinance/](http://www.water.ca.gov/wateruseefficiency/landscapeordinance/)
- Contact your local water agency or planning department for permits and additional local ordinance requirements (if applicable)
- Fremont WELo Requirements: <http://www.stopwaste.org/resource/fremont-landscape-requirements>
- Hayward WELo Requirements: <http://www.stopwaste.org/resource/hayward-bay-friendly-water-efficient-landscape-ordinance>