



City of El Segundo

Community Development Dept.
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Water Conservation in Landscaping Regulations

In 2006, [Assembly Bill 1881](#) was signed into law amending the Water Conservation in Landscape Act. This legislation required that the state update the original Water Efficient Landscape Model Ordinance, both of which amended existing municipal regulations pertaining to Water Conservation in Landscaping. The following regulations apply to all applicable landscaping projects in the City:

1. ESMC § 15-15A Water Conservation in Landscaping (Ordinance No. 1515, adopted in 2015).
2. ESMC § 15-2-14 Landscaping requirements for Vehicle Use Areas, Building Perimeter, and Property Perimeter areas.

Landscaping regulations apply to the following Projects:

- New development projects with an aggregate landscape area equal to or greater than 500 square feet requiring a building permit, plumbing permit, or design review.
- Rehabilitated landscape projects with an aggregate landscape area equal to or greater than 2,500 square feet requiring a building permit, plumbing permit, or design review.
- New development projects with an aggregate landscape area of 500 square feet to 2,500 square feet may comply with the performance requirements of this ordinance or conform to the prescriptive measures contained in ESMC § 15-15A-13.
- Projects with an area less than 2,500 square feet of landscaping area which uses graywater or rainwater captured on the site for the parcel's landscape water requirement (Estimated Total Water Use) entirely with treated or untreated graywater or through stored rainwater captured on the site must only conform to the California Plumbing Code (Title 24, Part 5, Chapter 16).
- Existing landscaping limited to the requirements described in ESMC § 15-15A-15.

Exempt Projects:

- Registered local, state or federal historical sites.
- Ecological restoration projects that do not require a permanent irrigation system.
- Mined-land reclamation projects that do not require a permanent irrigation system.
- Existing plant collections, as part of botanical gardens and arboretums open to the public.
- Any project with a landscaped area less than five 500 square feet, unless the Director of Community Development determines a permit is required.

PLAN REVIEW AND PERMIT SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:

A **Landscape documentation package** must be submitted to the City for review and approval of all landscaping projects to which the regulations apply. The Landscaping documentation package includes the following items:

- Project Information: Description of project. (New, rehabilitated, public, private, cemetery, or homeowner installed).
- Water Efficient Worksheet:
 - a) Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA) budget.
 - b) Estimated Total Water Use (ETWU).

- Soils Management Report: a site plan must be prepared describing the existing soil conditions at the site, soil texture, and water holding capacity. Soil amendments must be incorporated according to recommendations of the soil report and what is appropriate for the plants selected (see ESMC § 15-15A-7).
- Landscaping Design Plan: describing the proposed trees, shrubs, and ground covers in compliance with ESMC § 15-2-14 and the minimum required setbacks for the zoning district in which the property is located. The Landscaping Design Plan must also describe the spacing, number and container sizes of plant material proposed for the project.
- Irrigation System Design Plan and Maintenance Schedule: a site plan/landscaping plan describing the location of the water meter or separate water meter for irrigation, irrigation equipment, hydrozone locations, proposed planting areas, automatic sprinkler timer, rain sensor valves, water pressure regulators or other devices, estimated water calculations (water budget), and timer must water between 8 p.m. and 9 a.m.
- Grading Design Plan: must be included if significant slope changes are proposed to the site for the project. The grading plan must control drainage, minimize soil erosion, minimize water runoff and water waste.
- Stormwater Management and Rainwater Retention Plan: must minimize water runoff and increase infiltration, including on-site rainwater retention which recharges groundwater. (see ESMC § 15-15A-9).
- New Water Meter: a dedicated water meter is required for projects involving more than 1,000 SF of landscaping in non-residential property and residential landscaping projects involving 5,000 SF or more of landscaping area.
- Other Water Features: Pools, ponds, and waterfalls in landscape areas must recycle water and must be included in the high water use hydrozone area of the water budget calculation.
- Landscape Compliance Certificate: must be signed by the licensed professional and submitted to staff before a Plumbing or Building permit is issued for the project. By signing the Certificate, the professional is certifying that: 1) the proposed planting design and planting areas meet state and local zoning regulations, and 2) water calculations, soils report, and the irrigation system design were prepared by a licensed professional.

REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING PERMIT FINAL:

- Landscape Certificate of Completion: must be signed by the property owner and the licensed professional confirming the landscaping and irrigation has been installed in substantial compliance with the plans that were approved by the City.
- Soil Management and Maintenance Report: must be submitted describing the scheduled amendments to the soil.
- Landscape and Irrigation Maintenance schedule: must be submitted to the City describing the planned routine inspections that will be performed to maintain the landscaping areas, adjust and repair the irrigation system, replenish mulch, fertilize, prune and weed.
- Landscape Inspection: staff must inspect the property to ensure plants are thriving, mulching is providing coverage to soil, irrigation system is operable and no water runoff is going into the storm drain, or sidewalk.
- 3-Month Water Audit: must be submitted to the City describing the planned routine inspections that will be performed to maintain the landscaping areas, adjust and repair the irrigation system, replenish mulch, fertilize, prune and weed. The Water Audit report must be prepared by a certified Landscape Auditor, licensed by the state and must be submitted to the City. The irrigation audit report must document three months of water use after the installation of the plants and irrigation system is completed for the project. The water use must not exceed the approved water budget for the project.