



Media Release

New statewide emergency water conservation regulation now in effect

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SACRAMENTO – A new statewide [emergency water conservation regulation](#) that bans using potable (drinkable) water on decorative or non-functional grass at commercial, industrial, and institutional properties went into effect Friday. It also requires urban water suppliers to implement all demand-reduction actions under Level 2 of their Water Shortage Contingency Plans.

The State Water Board adopted the regulation at its May 24 board meeting, and the Office of Administrative Law gave it final approval on June 10. The new restrictions are in response to Governor Newsom's March 28 Executive Order calling for water conservation directives to address California's new normal of climate extremes.

The regulation's ban on watering non-functional turf (turf is defined as mowed grass) at commercial, industrial and institutional properties includes areas like the grass in front of or next to large commercial buildings and common areas managed by homeowners' associations. The ban does not include watering grass used for human recreation or other community activities, watering residential grass or watering trees. The ban also does not prohibit the use of recycled water for irrigating non-functional turf.

"With increased aridification as our new reality, there is an urgency to all of us understanding and acting to ensure that water conservation is a California way of life. These regulations are part of our shared responsibility to address non-essential outdoor water use as our communities experience record-breaking drought and plan for dry conditions into next year," said Joaquin Esquivel, chair of the State Water Board.

There also are new options for addressing water waste. In addition to the State Water Board, agencies that are already authorized to enforce infractions, like water suppliers and local government, are empowered to address violations of this regulation. A violation of the non-functional turf irrigation provision, for example, would be an infraction and subject to a fine of up to \$500. This is the second State Water Board water conservation emergency regulation of 2022; the prohibitions of the [first emergency regulation](#), adopted in January, also are infractions and are still in effect.



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

STATE WATER RESOURCES CONTROL BOARD

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The regulation also requires urban water suppliers to implement all demand-reduction actions under Level 2 of their Water Shortage Contingency Plans, which are actions meant to address a 10% to 20% water shortage. In addition, urban water suppliers are required to fast-track their submissions of supply and demand assessments to plan for potential extended dry conditions.

“Level 2” actions vary for each water supplier, but they often include things such as:

- Increasing communication about the importance of water conservation
- Limiting outdoor irrigation to certain days or hours
- Increasing patrolling to identify water waste
- Enforcing water-use prohibitions

Some water suppliers already have imposed strong new restrictions on customers’ water use in accordance with their drought management plans; property managers should check with their local suppliers for details. However, about half of the state’s 436 water suppliers have not yet activated Level 2, and 36 have not submitted drought plans.

The emergency regulation requires suppliers without drought plans to take certain conservation actions, such as conducting outreach to customers about conservation, restricting outdoor irrigation to two days a week and enforcing against wasteful water practices.

Water suppliers are expected to communicate the requirements of the emergency regulation to their customers. The State Water Board encourages agencies to provide additional assistance to disadvantaged communities and translate conservation announcements and materials into the languages spoken in their service areas. People who see water waste should report it at savewater.ca.gov or to their local water supplier, city or county. Frequently Asked Questions and more information on the State Water Board’s water conservation emergency regulations can be found at <https://bit.ly/conservationreg>.

The State Water Board’s mission is to preserve, enhance and restore the quality of California’s water resources and drinking water for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses, and to ensure proper allocation and efficient use for present and future generations.