

Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

In recognition of Healdsburg's leadership in implementing a community vision that promotes environmentally sound practices, the City Council adopted the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (No. 1091) in December 2009. This ordinance promotes the efficient design and installation of water-efficient landscapes in Healdsburg associated with new construction and substantial alterations of existing development where landscapes are proposed.

For a review of the complete ordinance, contact the City or visit our website at www.cityofhealdsburg.org.



Example of a natural landscape that is attractive and water efficient.

Submittal and Review Requirements

Step 1: Prepare scaled landscape planting and irrigation design plans.

Step 2: Calculate the project's Maximum Applied Water Allowance using the City's worksheet.

Step 3: Submit the plans and worksheet to the City along with your design review, grading or building permit application.

Step 4: After the permit is approved by the City, install the landscape planting and irrigation plans.

Step 5: After installation, file a Certificate of Completion with the City, which certifies that the installation is in compliance with the approved plan.

Step 6: Monitor the landscape planting and irrigation plan for its effectiveness.



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City of Healdsburg

Water Efficient Landscape Requirements



Balancing the value of landscapes with the need to conserve our limited water resources

Applicability

This ordinance applies to:

- All new residential, commercial, office, industrial, public or quasi-public projects with landscaping.
- All additions/remodels to existing residential, commercial, office, industrial, public or quasi-public projects with new or replaced contractor-installed landscapes of 2,500 square feet or more.
- All additions/remodels to existing residential, commercial, office, industrial, public or quasi-public projects with new or replaced property owner-installed landscapes of 5,000 square feet or more.

This ordinance does not apply to:

- Registered historical landscapes.
- Ecological restoration or mined land reclamation projects.
- Plant collections as part of a botanical garden and arboretum open to the public.
- New secondary dwelling units where landscaping is not proposed.

However, these projects are encouraged to use this ordinance as a guideline for all landscape and irrigation design.

Plant Selection, Water Use Limitations and Mulch

- Invasive plants shall not be installed.
- Turf shall not be installed on slopes exceeding 15%.
- Turf shall not be installed in planter areas 8 feet or less in width, including in planter strips.
- Similar water use plants shall be grouped together in hydrozones.
- Selected plants shall not cause the project's estimated total water demand to exceed the Maximum Applied Water Allowance, also known as the peak month water calculation, as shown on the City's worksheet.
- A minimum of 8 inches of non-mechanically compacted soil shall be provided for water absorption and root growth in planted areas, except within tree driplines.
- A minimum of a 3-inch layer of porous mulch shall be applied to all exposed soil surfaces of non-turf areas within the landscaped area.



Irrigation Design Standards

- A dedicated irrigation meter or submeter shall be installed.
- The irrigation system shall be designed to maximize the distribution uniformity.
- All landscaped areas shall be irrigated with automatic controllers with repeat start-times, multiple program potential and rain shut-off devices.
- Separate irrigation valves shall be used for different plant types, irrigation methods, solar exposures, microclimates, slopes and soil types.
- Check valves shall be installed as needed to prevent low head drainage.
- Pressure regulation shall be installed so that all components of the irrigation system operate at the manufacturer's recommended optimal pressure.
- Point application irrigation methods (e.g., drip, bubbler, etc.) shall be used in landscaped areas less than 5 feet wide.

For Further Information...

This brochure highlights only some of the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance requirements. Please consult the materials available through the City for detailed information on requirements, such as the required contents of landscape and irrigation design plans and who is deemed qualified to prepare them.