

## **"NEW"** 2009 Mission Springs Water District Water Efficient Landscaping Guidelines

The Mission Springs Water District approved a revised, updated version of its Water Efficient Landscaping Guidelines at its September 21, 2009 Board of Directors meeting. This document highlights the changes that were made to the Guidelines. For a complete look at the entire document please visit the MSWD web site at <https://www.mswd.org/conservation.aspx> and scroll down to find the MSWD Water Efficient Landscaping Guidelines link. For further information on this important topic please contact the District via the web site at <https://www.mswd.org/contactus> or call 760.329.5169 ext. 133.

Following are the highlights of changes made to the Guidelines:

### Under the Purpose and Intent Section

- All of the applicable types of new or rehabilitated landscaping are detailed, including infill projects and a reference to the City of Desert Hot Springs' pre-approved landscape designs.

### Under the Definitions Section

- C. "Applied Water," the low-quarter measurement method (DULQ) attainable performance measure of 75% for spray heads, 80% for rotary heads, 85% for recreational turf grass rotor heads, and 90% for drip/micro/PC bubblers, has been added.
- D. "Automatic Smart Irrigation Controller" means a solid-state timer, capable of operating valve stations to set the days and length of time of a water application automatically in response to changing weather conditions and or soil moisture levels, unless the use of the property would otherwise prohibit use of a timer. This is a new reference and requirement for Smart Controllers only to be installed.
- N. "ET adjustment factor" has been changed from 0.6 to a factor of 0.5 that, when applied to reference evapotranspiration, adjusts for plant factors and irrigation efficiency - two major influences upon the amount of water applied to the landscape. That changes the following combined plant mix calculation with a site-wide average of 0.38 as the basis of the plant factor portion of this calculation. The irrigation efficiency for purposes of the ET adjustment factor is 0.75. Therefore, the ET adjustment factor  $0.5 = (0.38/0.75)$ .
- "Overspray" means the water which is delivered beyond the landscaped area, wetting pavements, walks, structures, or other non-landscaped areas. Overhead irrigation is not permitted within 24 inches of any non-permeable surface, (a change from the former 18" setback). There are no restrictions on the irrigation type if the landscaped area is adjacent to a permeable area and no overspray or runoff occurs. Long-narrow or irregularly shaped areas, including turf less than (8) eight feet in width in any direction, shall be irrigated with subsurface irrigation or low-volume irrigation technology to prevent overspray

and water waste. This is really a significant change to keep water out of the gutters and where it belongs on the landscaped area.

- KK. "Rehabilitated landscape" means any relandscaping project whose choice of new plant material and/or new irrigation system components is such that the calculation of the site's estimated water use will be significantly changed and/or (newly added the following) requires a permit, plan check, or design review. The new estimated water use calculation must not exceed the maximum applied water allowance calculated for the site using a 0.5 ET adjustment factor.
- LL. "Runoff" means water which is not absorbed by the soil or landscape to which it is applied and flows from the planted area. For example, runoff may result from water that is applied at too great a rate (application rate exceeds infiltration rate), when there is a severe slope or when water is misapplied to hardscapes. (NEW) Non-turf areas on slopes greater than 25% shall be irrigated with drip irrigation or other low-volume irrigation technology to prevent runoff. Excessive water flow or runoff onto hardscapes is prohibited.

#### Under the Provisions for New or Rehabilitated Landscapes (Application Requirement) Section

- The Soil Management Plan is now required (formerly it was optional).
- Note that there is a new requirement that only the most current Landscape Guidelines of the Mission Springs Water District in effect at the time of application are applicable. For phased projects, each phase is subject to this requirement, i.e., the most current guidelines apply to each phase according to when application is made. Applications that are over one year old, and have not received a Certificate of Completion (replaces the old Certificate of Substantial Completion), will expire and must be re-submitted.
- All model homes are required to use signs and written information to demonstrate the principles of water efficient landscapes, and provide information to owners of new single family residential homes regarding the design, installation, management and maintenance of water efficient landscapes.
- Newly added is a prohibition that landscape irrigation is not allowed between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. except through use of a handheld bucket or hose equipped with a positive shutoff nozzle or device, or for short periods of time for the express purpose of adjustment or repairs to the irrigation system. Overhead irrigation shall be limited to the hours of 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 a.m. to minimize water waste caused by irrigating during times of high wind, high temperature, etc.
- Item 7 on the Checklist - The Soil Management Plan - shall include results of a soil probe test to determine sufficient soil depth to support intended plants, representative sample(s) of the site shall also be taken and submitted to an approved laboratory that will provide a soils report that includes evaluation and results detailing the following: soil type and texture, infiltration rate, pH, total soluble salts, and sodium. Along with the soils report shall be a summary

detailing any recommendations regarding the soil conditions, and the remediation efforts necessary to mitigate any limiting soil conditions.

- A final inspection is required as before, however the inspection can now only be performed by an inspector pre-approved and designated by the District. The cost of the initial inspection is included in the application fee. There are additional costs for any re-inspections as needed.

These guidelines are in line with the requirements of AB1881 and also incorporate information and examples from the Draft Landscape Water Use Efficiency Ordinance, Model Ordinance - Riverside Agencies (May 2009) created in part from the efforts of the Riverside County Water Task Force.

The District's guidelines must at least meet the minimum requirements of AB 1881 and generally are in agreement with the Riverside County Model Ordinance. However in some areas and given our arid desert climate, the District saw the need for exceeding the minimum requirements, which through the provisions of AB 1881, local agencies are encouraged to do.

One such instance can be seen in AB 1881's addressing all climates throughout the state under a one size fits all approach. Under AB 1881, guidelines for new housing developments and/or infill apply to landscapes 2,500 square feet or greater, and for rehabilitated landscapes, guidelines apply to landscapes 5,000 square feet or greater.

However, the District recognizes the need, especially in our arid desert climate, to look at every new home and/or rehabilitated landscape as an opportunity to save water. With this in mind, the District requires all new residential developments, infill single family homes and rehabilitated landscapes to meet the landscaping guideline requirements regardless of the amount of square footage. In doing so, the District is further protecting and conserving our desert region's most valuable resource, water.

Although for the most part other Coachella Valley cities and water agencies are generally in concurrence with these guidelines it is advisable to contact them directly for projects in their areas.