



# Water Conservation Policy

## *Chapter History*

*Prepared in 2009 in Response to Metropolitan Water District of  
Southern California's Request for Conservation Compliance*

*Adopted May 14, 2009, Resolution No. 2009-5-4*

*Revised August 14, 2014*

*Revised March 12, 2015*

*Revised June 11, 2015*

*Revised June 10, 2021*

The current Water Conservation Policy for the Rancho California Water District is enclosed.

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**Rancho California Water District  
WATER CONSERVATION POLICY**



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Compliance

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## **Section 1. Findings and Declaration of Policy**

The Rancho California Water District (District) finds and determines that because of the prevailing conditions in the State it is necessary and appropriate for the District to adopt, implement, and enforce a Water Conservation Policy to ensure sufficient water for human consumption, sanitation, and fire protection. The District further finds the waste or unreasonable use, or unreasonable method of use of water shall be prevented and that water conservation practices shall be encouraged at all times.

In times of drought or water supply cutbacks, provisions of this Policy may be modified in accordance with State of California Regulations, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's Water Surplus and Drought Management and Water Supply Action Plans, as well as Rancho California Water District's Water Shortage Contingency Plan (WSCP). This Policy is in effect at all times and defers updates and implementation strategies, regarding water conditions and supplies to the WSCP for timely communications and media outreach when stage alerts are executed.

## **Section 2. General Provisions**

In order to comply with requirements of state legislation and Best Management Practices, it shall be a violation of this Policy at any time to make, cause, or permit the use of water for residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, governmental, or any other purpose in a manner constituting waste. Customers shall abide by all requirements outlined in the applicable Shortage Stage of the WSCP including, but not limited to the following requirements at all times:

1. Refrain from hosing off sidewalks, driveways, and other hardscapes.
2. Refrain from washing vehicles (autos, trucks, trailers, motorhomes, boats, or other vehicles) with hoses not equipped with a shut-off nozzle. Use a hose equipped with an automatic shutoff valve or other device that causes it to cease dispensing water immediately when not in use.
3. Refrain from using non-recirculated water in a fountain or other decorative water feature.
4. Refrain from watering ornamental turf on public street medians,
5. Refrain from watering lawns in a manner that causes runoff, or within 48 hours after measureable precipitation.
6. Repair faucets, toilets, pipes and other potential sources of water leaks.
7. Irrigate landscape only between 6 p.m. and 9 a.m. This provision does not apply when:
  - a. Manually watering during the establishment period of a new landscape;
  - b. Supervised spot watering is done to address landscape issues;
  - c. Temperatures are predicted to fall below freezing;
  - d. Testing/repairing an irrigation system;
  - e. Using drip and point-to-point irrigation systems; and
  - f. A longer watering window is needed due to system constants
8. When installing plumbing fixtures, use low-flow devices, except for those that require high-flow fixtures for health and/or sanitary reasons. Where possible, install pool and spa covers to minimize water loss due to evaporation during non-operating days.

9. When installing new landscaping, refer to the Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS). Plant low-water California Friendly® Landscapes. Non-functional turf areas are not recommended. Turf-lined channels are only permitted when justified by environmental regulations.

### **Section 3. Administrative Fines**

All persons with excessive runoff that causes water to flow from property into any gutters, streets, or alleys are subject to an immediate fine of \$50. Those in violation of Section 2 General Provisions of this Policy are subject to the following:

10. For a first violation, the District may use a door hanger to alert the customer of the violation and shall issue a written notice of fact of such violation to the customer. The customer shall then be allowed a period of 10 days following issuance of the written notice to correct the violation described therein before a second violation will be issued.
11. For a second violation, the District shall issue a written notice of fact of such violation to the customer. The customer shall then be allowed a period of 10 days following issuance of the written notice to correct the violation described therein before a third violation will be issued.
12. For a third violation, the District shall issue a written notice of fact of such violation to the customer when a second violation has not been corrected within a period of 10 days following issuance of the second violation notice. A fine in the amount of \$50.00 shall be added to the customer's water bill upon issuance of a third violation. The customer shall be allowed a period of 5 days following issuance of the written notice to correct the third violation before a fourth violation will be issued.
13. For a fourth violation the District shall issue a written notice of fact of such violation to the customer when a third violation has not been corrected within a period of 5 days following issuance of the third violation notice. A fine in the amount of \$100.00 shall be added to the customer's water bill upon issuance of a fourth violation. The customer shall be allowed 5 days following issuance of the written notice to correct the fourth violation before a fifth violation will be issued.
14. For a fifth violation the District shall issue a written notice of fact of such violation to the customer when a fourth violation has not been corrected within a period of 5 days following issuance of the fourth violation notice. A fine in the amount of \$200.00 shall be added to the customer's water bill upon issuance of a fourth violation. The customer shall be allowed 5 days following issuance of the written notice to correct the fifth violation before a sixth violation will be issued.
15. For a sixth violation, the District shall issue a written notice of fact of such violation to the customer when the fifth violation has not been corrected within a period of 5 days following issuance of the fifth violation notice. A fine of \$500.00 per day shall be added to the customer's water bill following the issuance of the sixth violation notice until the violation is corrected.

Customers shall pay all water bills and fines in accordance with the due dates on their water bills. An Appeals Process is offered to customers that disagree with fines outlined in this section of the

Policy. If the appeal is upheld in favor of the customer, appropriate monies will be refunded. Details of the appeals process are included in Section 4 of this Policy.

The District shall use the revenues derived from the implementation of this section of the Policy for water use efficiency programs and rebates.

#### **Section 4. Appeals Process**

Any customer may appeal the imposition of fines of this Policy, by filing a written request with the District's Water Use Efficiency Department for an appeals hearing. The District must receive the request within 30 days of the fine notice. A request for a hearing shall set forth, in detail, all facts supporting the request.

The District's Water Use Efficiency Department shall, within 15 days of receiving a request for an appeal hearing provide written notice to the customer of the hearing date, time, and place. The hearing date shall not be more than 30 days from the mailing of such notice by certified mail, unless a later date is agreed to by the customer.

At the hearing, a Water Use Efficiency Department representative will represent the District. The customer will have the opportunity to present information supporting his or her position concerning the required irrigation evaluation or penalty charges. After the hearing, the Water Use Efficiency Department shall deliver a written report to the General Manager setting forth findings of fact, conclusions, and a recommendation on whether to uphold, modify, or reverse the original fines. Upon receipt of the written report, the General Manager shall issue his decision within 15 calendar days of the hearing. The written decision of the General Manager shall be sent to the customer by certified mail. The General Manager's decision shall be final on the 16th day after it is mailed, unless a request for a hearing is filed with the Board of Directors no later than 5:00 p.m. on the 15th day following such mailing.

Any customer may appeal a decision made by the General Manager, prior to the date that the General Manager's order becomes final, by filing a written request for a hearing with the Board of Directors. The request for the Board of Directors' hearing shall set forth in detail all the issues in dispute and all facts supporting the request. No later than 30 days after receipt of the request for a hearing, the Board of Directors shall either set the matter for a hearing, or deny the request for the hearing. Whether to grant or deny a request for a hearing on an appeal to the General Manager's decision shall be within the sole discretion of the Board of Directors.

If required, a hearing shall be held by the Board of Directors within 30 days of the date the request for a hearing was granted, unless a later date is agreed to by the customer and the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall make a determination whether to uphold, modify, or reverse the General Manager's decision. The order of the Board of Directors shall be final upon its adoption. The written decision and order of the Board of Directors shall be sent to the customer by certified mail within 15 days after the close of the hearing.

If the matter is not heard within the required time, due to actions or inactions of the customer or the Board of Director's decision to deny the request for the hearing, the General Manager's decision shall be final.

#### **Section 5.Variance Conditions**

A variance may be issued by the District, in writing, to grant a temporary variance for water uses otherwise prohibited under this Policy if it is determined that failure to grant such variance would

cause an emergency condition adversely affecting the health, sanitation, or fire protection for the public or the person requesting such variance, and under the following conditions:

1. Compliance with this Policy cannot be technically accomplished during the duration of a water supply shortage or other condition for which the Policy is in effect.
2. Alternative methods or technology used as part of District sanctioned trial or test study can be implemented which will achieve the same level of reduction in water use.
3. Doctor-approved health circumstances, illness or injury will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
4. No variances will be issued, beginning in Shortage Stage 3b of the WSCP, for filling swimming pools, establishing or expanding a landscape area, leaks not repaired within 48 hours, and existing outdoor water budgets.
5. Variances will be considered for health and safety issues only in Shortage Stages 4 and 5.

A written variance shall be accepted by the Planning Department, and may be denied at the sole discretion of the District.

### **Section 6. Technical Assistance**

The District will provide technical assistance to customers who wish to improve water use efficiency. This technical assistance may include the provision of materials a customer can use to perform a self-assessment and a “Water Use Efficiency Evaluation” conducted by the District. Customers may request these services by contacting the District’s Water Use Efficiency Department. Receiving technical assistance from the District does not preclude customers from any fines assessed for violations.

### **Section 7. Definitions of Terms**

**Appellant** - means the customer appealing a decision of the District for relief from the requirements of this Policy.

**Appeal Process** - refers to a set of procedures allowing an appellant the opportunity to present facts and details, supporting his or her position concerning fines of this policy.

**Best Management Practices** – defines the best and most proven water conservation methods for urban water users in California.

**Board of Directors** - means the Board of Directors of the Rancho California Water District.

**California Friendly® Landscapes** – refers to landscape that features low-water using plants, state-of-the-art irrigation and controllers, sustainable landscaping techniques/ maintenance plan.

**Customer** - means any person, firm, partnership, association, corporation, or local political entity using water obtained from the water system of Rancho California Water District.

**Evaluation Check List** – will differ between the residential customer and the commercial customer. The appropriate Evaluation Check List will be provided by District to the customer for the purpose of evaluating the cause of water waste.

**District** – refers to Rancho California Water District.

**Excessive Runoff** - over irrigation of landscaped areas, leaks, or any other type of action that would cause water to flow into any gutter, streets, or alleys.

**Non-Functional Turf Areas** – (not recommended) a landscape turf area used for aesthetic purposes.

**Variance Conditions** – refers to a conflict requesting a temporary variation for water use.

**Waste** - means any unreasonable or non-beneficial use of water, or any unreasonable method of use of water, including, but not limited to, the specific uses prohibited and restricted by this policy as hereinafter set forth.

**Water Use Classification of Landscape Species (WUCOLS)** – is a guide to help landscape professionals identify irrigation water needs of landscape species. It can be used either for the selection of species or to assist in developing irrigation schedules. It is not intended to be used as a required or approved list by RCWD for selection of plant species – the WUCOLS guide is provided by District upon request.

**Water Use Efficiency Evaluation Report** – is a standard of site data collections to efficiently evaluate the performance of an irrigation system.

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