

Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (2016-410) FAQs

What projects are subject to compliance with the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance?

The requirements under ordinance Section 15.32.010.A apply to all projects that involve at least 500 sf of new irrigated landscape area OR 1,000 sf of rehabilitated irrigated landscape AND said project requires a building permit, site development permit, landscaping permit, plan check, design review.

How do I comply with the ordinance?

If the project includes more than 2,500 sf of new/rehabilitated irrigated landscape area, you must submit a complete Landscape Project Application and Documentation Package as outlined in Section 15.32.050 of the ordinance.

What must a Landscape Project Application and Documentation Package contain?

- Outdoor Water Efficiency Checklist
- A Water Budget Calculation IF you elect to not comply with the planting and turf restrictions (must complete the Water Efficient Landscape Worksheet).
- Soil Management Report or Soil Management Survey
- Landscape Design Plans
- Irrigation System Design Plans
- Grading Design Plan or Grading Design Survey

What if the project is subject to the outdoor water efficiency ordinance, but **includes less than 2,500 sf** of new/rehabilitated irrigated landscape area?

In this case, you may comply with the performance requirements of this ordinance called out above OR conform to the **Prescriptive Measures** allowed for in Section 15.32.010B and include all of these measures on the landscape plans. The prescriptive measures include submission of the Outdoor Water Efficiency Checklist and a landscape/planting plan with your permit/design review application and submission of a Certificate of Completion & Installation, and irrigation schedule, and an irrigation and landscape maintenance schedule prior to final inspections.

Who is qualified to fill out and submit the Outdoor Water Use Efficiency Checklist?

It is recommended that the project landscape architect, landscape designer, landscape contractor, or other person authorized to design a landscape complete the checklist.

On the Outdoor Water Use Efficiency Checklist, what do I put for the “Total Landscape Area?”

This area includes the total new or rehabilitated **irrigated** landscape area included in the project and any proposed water features that are subject to the Maximum Applied Water Allowance calculation (Section 15.32.020.II).

What if my project involves landscaping that will only be irrigated for an establishment period?

Pursuant to Section 15.32.081, any landscape areas that have temporary irrigation to establish plants are exempt from the ordinance. The landscape plans for the project should call out all areas of temporary irrigation.

How much irrigated turf (sod) am I allowed to have?

Under the ordinance, Section 15.32.050, you may forego completing a water budget and submit only the documents required with the Landscape Documentation Package (discussed above) when your project does not propose any new or rehabilitated turf. However, if you elect to install turf, you must additionally complete a water budget (Water Efficient Landscape Worksheet) with your application.

What is considered irrigated turf under the ordinance?

Turf means a ground cover surface of mowed grass. Annual bluegrass, Kentucky bluegrass, Perennial ryegrass, Red fescue, and Tall fescue are cool-season grasses. Bermuda grass, Kikuyu grass, Seashore Paspalum, St. Augustine grass, Zoysia grass, and Buffalo grass are warm-season grasses. These types of irrigated, mowed lawns are restricted by the ordinance.

What are some other options for grass that would not be considered turf under the ordinance?

Native grasses such as Purple Needle Grass, Foothill Needle Grass, Red Fescue, Idaho Fescue, and California Fescue are good options that require much less irrigation than typical mowed-lawn type grasses.

What about the kinds of plants I can have?

80% of your landscape area must be native or low/no water use plants, unless you elect to also complete a water budget. Please refer to the Town’s Native and Supplemental Plant lists located within the Town Design Guidelines or on the Town’s webpages at www.portolavalley.net. Also, you may not plant any plants listed on the Town’s Discouraged Plant list or those considered invasive. For a complete list of plants and their water use evaluations, refer to <http://www.water.ca.gov/wateruseefficiency/docs/wucols00.pdf> Species Evaluation List 1999.

What was it I heard about the Town requiring a separate water meter for my irrigated landscape?

Pursuant to Section 15.32.081A.i.1, if your project involves more than 5,000sf of irrigated landscape area, you are required to install a separate water meter for the landscaping. This separate meter may be a privately owned meter or submeter.

Am I required to conduct a soil analysis?

If the project involves more than 2,500 sf of irrigated landscape area, then you are required to either submit a Soil Management Report or complete the Soil Management Survey. Section 15.32.060 outlines what must be included in the Soil Management Report.

Do I need to submit a grading plan?

If the project involves more than 2,500 sf of irrigated landscape area, you must submit either a grading plan or the Grading Design Survey. However, please keep in mind that you are subject to a site development permit if your project involves 50 cubic yards or more of site grading.

Do irrigation plans need to be included in my building permit plans?

If the project involves more than 2,500 sf of irrigated landscape area, you must submit irrigation plans with your building permit application. If the project does not involve a building permit, then the irrigation plans must be submitted as part of the Site Development Permit or landscape plan review. These irrigation plans must be drawn by a landscape architect, certified irrigation designer, landscape contractor, or any other person authorized to design an irrigation system.

What needs to be shown on the Landscape and Irrigation plans?

Please refer to sections 15.32.080 and 15.32.081 of the ordinance.

Who can complete an Irrigation Audit Report?

The irrigation audit report may only be completed by a Certified Landscape Irrigation Auditor, pursuant to Section 15.32.020.DD.

What documentation do I need to submit prior to obtaining final inspections for the project?

Prior to final inspection, a Certificate of Completion and Landscape Audit Report must be submitted for review and approval. Section 15.32.083 outlines what must be included on the Certificate of Completion and Section 15.32.090 outlines what must be included in the Landscape Audit Report. Any reports or documentation that do not include this information will not be accepted.

Additionally, if your irrigated landscape area is over 5,000sf, you must have a separate water meter installed and inspected by the Planning Department.

What information is required by the ordinance to be contained within the Landscape Audit Report?

The Landscape Audit Report shall include, but is not limited to: inspection to confirm that the landscaping and irrigation system were installed as specified in the Landscape and Irrigation Plans, system tune-up, system test with distribution uniformity, reporting overspray or run off that causes overland flow, and preparation of an irrigation schedule.

The Landscape Audit Report **shall include** the following statement: “The landscape and irrigation system has been installed as specified in the Landscape and Irrigation Plans and complies with the criteria of the Ordinance and the permit.”

**The Outdoor Water Conservation Ordinance can be found on the Town website <http://www.portolavalley.net/town-government/municipal-code>