



Information & Resources For Your Business:

WATER CONSERVATION



Reductions in Water Supply Lead to Mandatory Conservation Rules

In response to a 25% reduction in Russian River water supplies implemented by the Sonoma County Water Agency, the City of Sonoma has implemented a Stage 2 Mandatory Water Conservation Program. The objective of the conservation regulations is to **achieve a citywide reduction in water usage of 25%**, measured against a “base year” of 2004, by implementing a series of requirements for both business and residential customers.

Under Stage 2 Water Conservation requirements, **landscape irrigation is prohibited except on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays from 7 p.m. through 7 a.m. the following day.** Other rules under Stage 2 Mandatory Conservation that affect businesses include prohibitions against:

- Irrigation that allows water to run off due to excessive watering, overspray, or irrigating when raining
- Washing of sidewalks, walkways, driveways, parking lots and other hard-surfaced areas
- Washing of vehicles unless using a bucket and hose equipped with a shut-off nozzle, or using a commercial carwash that recycles water.

In addition, both businesses and residents are strongly encouraged to continue to implement further conservation measures on a voluntary basis in order to achieve the 25% citywide reduction goal. For businesses, one of the best ways to identify ways to conserve is to **obtain a free, on-site, no-obligation water assessment.** The assessment will provide a conservation plan tailored to your business and identify potential rebates and ongoing cost savings. To learn more about getting a water assessment for your business, contact the Sonoma County Water Agency, (707) 547-1968. For more info about Stage 2 Water Conservation requirements, contact the City's Water Conservation Coordinator at 933-2247.

Restrictions on Turf Irrigation at Commercial Properties

Further restrictions have been put in place by the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), which has issued an order prohibiting the irrigation of commercial and governmental ornamental turf through October 2, 2009. Ornamental turf is interpreted by the Sonoma County Water Agency as turf that is not used regularly by a significant number of people, including turf at office and other commercial buildings, business parks, and median strips. The prohibition does not apply to turf irrigated by recycled water or by private wells. An exemption is possible for commercial customers that establish and implement a water budget with a 25% reduction. City of Sonoma Public Works staff will work with affected commercial customers on a one-on-one basis to assist them in compliance.

If you are considering landscape modifications for your business, a valuable local resource is Qualified Water Efficient Landscapers (QWEL). These Sonoma and Marin area landscape professionals are making a positive impact on reducing landscape water demand by becoming more water efficient in landscape design, maintenance, and operation. QWEL provides 20 hours of educational foundation based on principals of proper plant selection for the local climate, irrigation system design and maintenance, and irrigation system programming and operation. For a list of QWEL certified professionals, visit qweltraining.com.

Rebates Are Available

“**Cash For Grass**” turf replacement rebates are available in both the City of Sonoma and the Valley of the Moon Water District service areas, subject to available funding. In the City of Sonoma, commercial customers are eligible for a total rebate of up to \$3,000. A pre- and post-inspection is required. For more information, call (707) 547-1968.

The **Landscape Equipment Rebate** program offered by the City of Sonoma is designed to encourage businesses to improve the efficiency of their existing irrigation systems. Rebates range from 50% (for irrigation controllers, matched precipitation rate sprinkler heads, and sub-meters) to 75% (for drip irrigation equipment, pressure regulation devices, and valves) or even 100% (for rain shut-off devices). The first step is a free water use assessment; call the Sonoma County Water Agency, (707) 547-1968 or the Sonoma County Business Environmental Alliance at (707) 565-6455.

Rebates are available to commercial sewer customers through Sonoma County Sanitation for a variety of **water efficiency improvements**, including smart irrigation controllers, high efficiency toilets and urinals, high efficiency clothes washers, connectionless food steamers, water efficient ice machines, pressurized water brooms, dry vacuum pumps, medical equipment steam sterilizers, and more. For details, visit sonomacountywater.org/scsrebates or call (707) 547-1968.

Costs associated with implementing permanently attached water efficiency upgrades are also eligible for financing through the Sonoma County Energy Independence program. Combined with the available rebates, this program can allow your business to significantly improve your water efficiency with very little upfront cost. Visit sonomacountyenergy.org for more information.

Lodging Industry Programs

Lodging properties are encouraged to implement an “opt in” linen exchange program, whereby guest room sheets and towels are only replaced upon request, rather than automatically changed each day. The Sonoma Valley Economic Development Partnership provides linen exchange cards for use in guest rooms at no charge. Lodging properties that have implemented this program report a high level of guest participation and significant savings in costs for both water and energy. For more information, visit SonomaValley4Biz.com.

In addition, a “Dear Guest” letter from the Mayor of Sonoma has been made available to all lodging businesses in Sonoma, emphasizing the importance of water conservation in keeping Sonoma Valley a sustainable community and including suggestions for water-saving behaviors while visiting.

Questions? Contact the City's Water Conservation Coordinator at 933-2247.