

# 9 THINGS TO KNOW!

## About Evolving Water Use Efficiency Standards

**Joe Berg, Director of Water Use Efficiency  
Municipal Water District of Orange County**

In 2018, Senate Bill 606 and Assembly Bill 1668 established a long-term water use efficiency standards-based framework that will begin January 1, 2024. This framework is designed to replace California's first-ever statewide mandate for urban water suppliers to reduce water use by 20% by 2020.

The new framework includes volumetric water use efficiency standards for indoor residential water use, outdoor residential and

dedicated irrigation meter water use, and distribution system water loss. These volumetric standards will be aggregated to form each agency's Water Use Objective (Objective). Annually, water suppliers will calculate their Objective and compare it to their actual water use. Water suppliers will be considered in compliance if their actual water use is less than or equal to their Objective.

As currently proposed, the standards are:



**1**

### STATE AGENCIES

The California Department of Water Resources, State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), and others have been developing the standards framework through a stakeholder-based process since 2017 and will be adopting the standards by June 30, 2022.

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### URBAN RETAIL WATER SUPPLIERS

Urban retail water suppliers are required to submit their first compliance report by January 1, 2024, and submit progress reports annually after that.

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### CUSTOMIZED CALCULATIONS

While each standard will be calculated separately, all four volumetric standards will be aggregated to calculate the customized Objective for each agency.

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### VARIANCES CAN BE REQUESTED

A variety of variances, including seasonal population, high salinity recycled water, evaporative coolers, and more can be requested. However, all adjustments require SWRCB approval before they are applied.

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### COMPLIANCE REQUIRED

Agencies will be required to achieve compliance with their aggregated Objective by January 1, 2027.

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### MWDOC OFFERS ASSISTANCE

MWDOC has been offering retail water agencies a variety of assistance to prepare for compliance, including:

- A robust water loss technical assistance program since October 2015 and shared services since 2018.
- Consultant support to measure the irrigated area associated with Dedicated Irrigation Meters.
- A comprehensive menu of consumer-based incentive and educational programs designed to improve water use efficiency across all customer classifications.

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*(Continued)*



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### FOR AGENCIES THAT DO NOT ACHIEVE COMPLIANCE:

- Starting November 1, 2023, the SWRCB may issue information orders to Urban Water Suppliers not meeting their Objective;
- November 1, 2024, the SWRCB may issue a written notice to suppliers not meeting their Objective;
- November 1, 2027, the SWRCB may issue civil liability (financial penalty) to suppliers not meeting their Objective.

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### A BONUS INCENTIVE INCLUDED

- The framework includes a bonus incentive for potable water reuse, which is capped at a maximum of 15% of the Objective. The Groundwater Replenishment System qualifies for this incentive, benefiting all agencies pumping from the Orange County Water District groundwater basin.
- Landscaped areas irrigated with purple-pipe recycled water also receive a recycled water use benefit in the form of a higher Evapotranspiration (ET) Adjustment Factor of 1.0.

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### EXEMPTIONS AND ADJUSTMENTS

Sports fields, engineered slopes, and other special landscapes will receive an ET Adjustment Factor of 1.0; some landscapes are exempt, including but not limited to cemeteries, historic sites, and public botanical gardens.

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**Click on the image to the left to download a chart that summarizes the indoor, outdoor, and water loss standards over time.**

EFFICIENCY STANDARD	BASIS OF STANDARD	TIMELINE			
		2020	2025	2029	2030*
INDOOR RESIDENTIAL	Service Area Population	2022-2029			42 GPCD
		55 GPCD	47 GPCD		
OUTDOOR RESIDENTIAL	Irrigated Area, Irrigatable Area, & Weather Factor	Existing Development	80% ET Adjustment Factor	65% ET Adjustment Factor	
		New Development	55% ET Adjustment Factor	55% ET Adjustment Factor	
OUTDOOR DEDICATED IRRIGATION METERS	Irrigated Area & Weather Factor	Existing Development	80% ET Adjustment Factor	65% ET Adjustment Factor	
		New Development	45% ET Adjustment Factor	45% ET Adjustment Factor	
DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM WATER LOSS	Gallons/Connection Day of Real Loss Individualized targets set by State Board Economic	Urban Water Retailers	Establish compliance with individualized water loss standard by 2021 using 2025, 2026 or 2027 water audit results. Only one year of compliance is required.	Every 3 years after 2028, establish compliance with 3-year average real loss water audit results.	