

## Using This FAQ

This is general information to help irrigation professionals comply with provisions for existing landscapes of the 2015 California Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO). Section 490.1(3) and 490.1(4) of the ordinance states:

- Existing landscapes limited to Sections 493, 493.1 and 493.2; and
- Cemeteries. Recognizing the special landscape management needs of cemeteries, new and rehabilitated cemeteries are limited to Sections 492.4, 492.11, and 492.12; and existing cemeteries are limited to Sections 493, 493.1, and 493.2.

This guide addresses only provisions 493, 493.1 and 493.2 of MWELO. For more compliance guides to MWELO, visit [www.rainbird.com/agency/california/MWELO.htm](http://www.rainbird.com/agency/california/MWELO.htm).

This guide is based on information published by the State of California and the California Department of Water Resources. It references only the landscape and irrigation-related provisions of the ordinance and does not represent the entire ordinance. Any information in this guide is for general reference only and is subject to change without notice. For the entire current version and status of the ordinance, please visit [www.water.ca.gov](http://www.water.ca.gov).

## § 493. Provisions for Existing Landscapes.

(a) A local agency may by mutual agreement, designate another agency, such as a water purveyor, to implement some or all of the requirements contained in this ordinance. Local agencies may collaborate with water purveyors to define each entity's specific responsibilities relating to this ordinance.

### § 493.1. Irrigation Audit, Irrigation Survey, and Irrigation Water Use Analysis.

(a) This section, 493.1, shall apply to all existing landscapes that were installed before December 1, 2015 and are over one acre in size.

## COMPLIANCE TIP:

**(493.1) EXISTING LANDSCAPES** Installed before December 1, 2015 and > 1 acre in size.

The Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA) for existing landscapes is:

$$MAWA = (0.8)(ET_o)(LA)(0.62)$$

Where  $ET_o$  is the reference evapotranspiration rate and  $LA$  is the landscape area.

**(1)** For all landscapes in 493.1(a) that have a water meter, the local agency shall administer programs that may include, but not be limited to, irrigation water use analyses, irrigation surveys, and irrigation audits to evaluate water use and provide recommendations as necessary to reduce landscape water use to a level that does not exceed the Maximum Applied Water Allowance for existing landscapes. The Maximum Applied Water Allowance for existing landscapes shall be calculated as:  
 $MAWA = (0.8) (ET_o)(LA)(0.62)$ .

**(2)** For all landscapes in 493.1(a), that do not have a meter, the local agency shall administer programs that may include, but not be limited to, irrigation surveys and irrigation audits to evaluate water use and provide recommendations as necessary in order to prevent water waste.

**(b)** All landscape irrigation audits shall be conducted by a certified landscape irrigation auditor.

**§ 493.2. Water Waste Prevention.**

**(a)** Local agencies shall prevent water waste resulting from inefficient landscape irrigation by prohibiting runoff from leaving the target landscape due to low head drainage, overspray, or other similar conditions where water flows onto adjacent property, non-irrigated areas, walks, roadways, parking lots, or structures. Penalties for violation of these prohibitions shall be established locally.

**(b)** Restrictions regarding overspray and runoff may be modified if:

**(1)** The landscape area is adjacent to permeable surfacing and no runoff occurs; or

**(2)** The adjacent non-permeable surfaces are designed and constructed to drain entirely to landscaping.