



Over watering/excessive runoff is prohibited and may result in a fine.

What is the water waste enforcement ordinance?

Unanimously approved by Valley Water’s Board of Directors on May 24, 2022, the water waste enforcement ordinance will enforce restrictions on outdoor water use that apply to residents and businesses, first through education and subsequently with notices of violation. Fines typically start at \$100, but could be as high as \$10,000 for extraordinary amounts of waste.

What violations will be subject to enforcement?

The ordinance enforces Valley Water’s restrictions by encouraging the public to report water waste to Valley Water. Enforceable violations are:

- Watering ornamental lawns more than two days a week.
- Watering outdoor landscapes mid-day (between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.).
- Any outdoor watering that results in excessive runoff.
- Watering outdoors during/within 48 hours of rainfall.

Why is the enforcement of irrigation restrictions necessary?

We are in a severe drought emergency. Santa Clara County is enduring a third consecutive year of drought. Record-dry conditions in 2022 have greatly reduced the amount of available drinking water. Reservoirs across California and locally are well below average for this time of year. We haven’t made enough progress in our conservation efforts and believe this ordinance will help us increase countywide water-savings.



San Luis Reservoir at 98% capacity (top) in 2017 and the water level (bottom) now due to increase in drought conditions.

How can you report violations?

Valley Water’s water waste inspectors respond to reports of water waste and violations of local water use restrictions. To report water waste, you may select any of these convenient options:

 Download our Access Valley Water app or go to access.valleywater.org and select the “Conserve Water & Save with Rebates” category, or search “water waste” in the search bar.

 Call (408) 630-2000

 Email WaterWise@valleywater.org

Please include photos, cross-streets, landmarks, date, time and any other relevant details when reporting water waste. If preferred, reports can be submitted anonymously.

How will residents or businesses be notified of violations?

When Valley Water receives a report that water waste restrictions are being violated, the retailer will be notified. Valley Water or the retailer will initiate the enforcement process. Valley Water or retailers will use a series of notifications to inform those who are reported to be wasting water. These may include educational letters with tips on how to reduce water use and door hangers. If the violation persists after multiple notifications, fines may result.

How much are the fines?

When a violation is reported, we will start out with educational notifications to help people identify and address water waste and to let people know uncorrected violations will be fined. While we emphasize an educational approach, the fines will express the importance of following the restrictions to protect our water supply.

What violations will result in a fine?

Enforcement will be focused on water waste reports that are documented, with a specified address and source of water.



Outdoor watering is prohibited between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.

Will this ordinance add restrictions to golf courses, parks, sports fields and swimming pools?

The ordinance's two-day per week watering restriction is for non-functional turf, which is solely ornamental and does not serve a community or neighborhood function. While golf courses, parks and sports fields are not limited to the two-day per week watering restriction, they are prohibited from runoff and mid-day watering. Valley Water encourages golf courses and parks to budget their water to prevent overuse.

This ordinance does not add restrictions to swimming pools. We also encourage conversion of high water use landscape, including pools, to water-efficient landscape. Valley Water offers extensive rebates to convert your pool to a drought-resilient landscape. Visit watersavings.org to learn more.

Where does this enforcement apply?

The prohibitions apply to properties in Santa Clara County that receive water supplied or managed by Valley Water directly or indirectly. The enforcement program will complement the existing enforcement programs of our water retailers. You can locate your water retailer here:

valleywater.org/find-my-retailer

Is the landlord or tenant responsible for violations?

If a fine is assessed for water waste as outlined in this enforcement ordinance, it will be assessed to the property owner and not the tenant. The State of California prohibits homeowners associations from fining or requiring tenants to reverse or remove water-efficient landscaping measures, to fine someone for reducing or eliminating watering of their landscape, or to enforce landscaping guidelines or policies that prohibit the use of low water-using plants. Additional details can be found here:

<https://delivr.com/27jet>

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