



# Residential Outdoor Water Use

Information and Best Practices for Conservation

## TIPS

...for outdoor water conservation

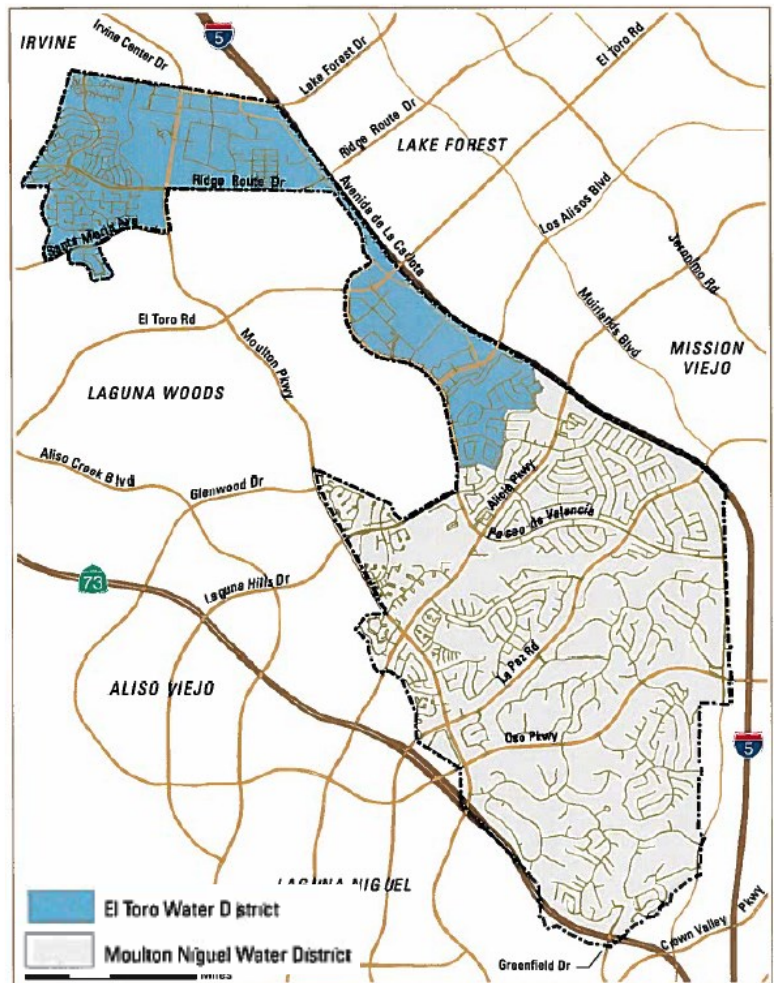
- **Check with your water district** for their specific requirements regarding reduced water usage and new regulations.
- **Don't wash down hard or paved surfaces** such as sidewalks, driveways, or patios. Use a broom to sweep instead.
- **When washing your vehicles**, use a bucket of soapy water and only rinse with the hose. The hose must have an automatic shut-off nozzle—don't let water run.
- **Modify your landscaping and irrigation system** to waste less water AND use less water (see landscape tips below).
- **Use a pool cover** to prevent evaporation of water during hot weather.

## LANDSCAPE

- **Replace lawn** with drought tolerant landscaping. Grass typically requires a lot of water. Use California natives and other plants with low water needs.
- **Apply mulch around trees and plants.** A layer of mulch slows evaporation of soil moisture.
- **Water landscaping only when needed.** Don't water when it's raining or has recently rained.
- **Check your irrigation system** for proper function, and make sure there are no broken sprinkler heads or leaks. Make sure it's set to water at appropriate times and intervals. Use drip irrigation, if possible.
- **Consider installing a rain shut-off gauge or a smart irrigation controller.** A rain shut-off gauge prevents your system from running while it's raining. Smart controllers automatically adjust watering to meet landscape needs.

## KNOW YOUR WATER DISTRICT

There are two water districts that serve Laguna Hills residents. Contact your water district or check their website for conservation regulations, pricing, and rebates or other incentives.



### El Toro Water District

etwd.com  
(949) 837-0660  
24251 Los Alisos Blvd.  
Lake Forest, CA 92630

### Moulton Niguel Water District

www.mnwd.com  
(949) 831-2500  
27500 La Paz Rd.  
Laguna Niguel, CA 92677

## ARTIFICIAL TURF

Can you use artificial turf to help cut down on outdoor water usage? Absolutely. Artificial turf is permitted in front, side, and rear yards of single family residential properties. In order to ensure a long life for your artificial turf and to maintain the high aesthetic standards of our community, the following criteria must be met when utilizing artificial turf on your property.

- Must have a minimum 8-year “no-Fade” warranty and must be ultra-violet stabilized to minimize fading and deterioration.
- Must be installed according to manufacturer’s specifications by a licensed professional.
- Must be installed and maintained to effectively simulate the appearance of a well maintained lawn. It shall be maintained in a green, fadeless condition, free of weeds, debris, tears, holes, and impressions.
- The use of indoor/outdoor plastic or nylon carpeting as a replacement for artificial turf or natural turf is prohibited. Additionally, artificial shrubs, flowers, trees, and vines, in-lieu of live plant material are prohibited.
- Areas of living plant material (e.g. flower beds, plant borders, tree wells, etc.) shall be included in the overall landscape design of any front yard areas utilizing artificial turf. Living plant material can include shrubs, vines, trees, and groundcovers.
- Artificial turf must be separated from flower beds and other live landscaping by a concrete mow strip, bender board, or other appropriate barrier in order to prevent intrusion of living plant material into the artificial turf.
- Obnoxious odors caused by animal waste are prohibited.

## FAQ

- **Do I need a permit to change out my landscaping or install artificial turf?**

Maybe. If your project exceeds 500 square feet of new landscape area or 2,500 square feet of rehabilitated landscape area, it may require City review and approval. Further, your project will be subject to the specific landscape and water efficiency requirements in Laguna Hills Municipal Code 9-46 and 9-47. The Landscape water efficiency ordinance and guidelines can be found on the City’s website under “Forms, Documents & Maps.” Check with a planner if you are unsure whether your landscape project is subject to permits or review by the City.

- **Can I just replace my front lawn with gravel or paving?**

No. Residential front yards are required to be landscaped with live vegetation (or artificial turf—see above), except for a driveway (about the width of your garage door) and a front walk (not to exceed 4’ wide). Non-living materials such as mulch, stones, and pavers may be a component of your landscape plan, in addition to live materials.

## RESOURCES

- Check with your water district. They will have resources and information on the rebate programs available to you.
- [www.ocwatersmart.com](http://www.ocwatersmart.com)—Resources and Rebates from the Municipal Water District of OC
- [www.bewaterwise.com](http://www.bewaterwise.com)—Resources from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
- [ocgardenfriendly.com](http://ocgardenfriendly.com)—Plant recommendations and irrigations schedules
- [www.queltraining.com](http://www.queltraining.com)—Find a qualified water efficient landscaper
- [www.clca.org](http://www.clca.org)—Find a landscape contractor (CA Landscape Contractors Association)