

1 [Water Efficient Irrigation]

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3 **Ordinance amending the San Francisco Administrative Code by repealing Chapter 63 in**  
4 **its entirety and adding Chapter 63, requiring the development and maintenance of**  
5 **landscape irrigation controls for specified new construction landscapes and landscape**  
6 **rehabilitation projects.**

7 NOTE: Additions are *single-underline italics Times New Roman*;  
8 deletions are *strike-through italics Times New Roman*.  
9 Board amendment additions are double-underlined;  
Board amendment deletions are ~~strikethrough-normal~~.

10 Be it ordained by the People of the City and County of San Francisco:

11 Section 1. Environmental Findings. The Planning Department has determined that the  
12 actions contemplated in this Ordinance are in compliance with the California Environmental  
13 Quality Act (California Public Resources Code sections 21000 et seq.). Said determination is  
14 on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors in File No. 101079 and is  
15 incorporated herein by reference.

16 Section 2. The San Francisco Administrative Code is hereby amended by repealing  
17 Chapter 63 in its entirety and adding a new Chapter 63, to read as follows:

18 SEC. 63.1. TITLE.

19 This chapter shall be known as the Water Efficient Irrigation Ordinance.

20 SEC. 63.2. INTENT.

21 The Board of Supervisors finds that:

22 (a) Irrigated landscapes contribute significantly to the quality of life of the people of San  
23 Francisco by providing areas for active and passive recreation and as an enhancement to the  
24 environment by cleaning air and water, and adding to the natural beauty of our commercial,  
25 industrial, and residential neighborhoods.

1 (b) San Francisco has been a leader in water conservation policy in California and  
2 currently has the lowest per capita use of water in the state. Our potable water supply is a vital  
3 public resource that faces ever increasing demands; and landscape design, installation,  
4 maintenance, and management can and should be water efficient.

5 (c) In 2006, the California Legislature passed and the Governor signed Assembly Bill  
6 1881, the Water Conservation in Landscaping Act, which enacted Article 10.8 of the California  
7 Government Code requiring that local agencies adopt a water efficient landscape ordinance  
8 that meets water conservation criteria and standards adopted by the California Department of  
9 Water Resources.

10 (d) Adoption of this ordinance by the Board of Supervisors and adoption of regulations  
11 by the Public Utilities Commission will improve the effectiveness of the City's landscape water  
12 efficiency program and ensure compliance with the requirements of the State's Water  
13 Conservation in Landscaping Act.

14 (e) Consistent with these legislative findings, this ordinance will:

15 (1) Promote the values and benefits of landscapes while recognizing the need to  
16 invest water and other resources as efficiently as possible;

17 (2) Encourage the use of climate appropriate and local California native plant  
18 species.

19 (3) Establish a structure for planning, designing, installing, maintaining, and  
20 managing water efficient landscapes in new construction and rehabilitated projects;

21 (4) Establish provisions for water management practices and water waste  
22 prevention for existing landscapes;

23 (5) Use water efficiently without waste by setting a Maximum Applied Water  
24 Allowance, using state mandated formulas and accounting for local climatic conditions, that  
25 will serve as an upper limit for water use by irrigated landscapes; and

1 (6) Comply with the requirements of Article 10.8 of the California Government  
2 Code, enacted by the State as the Water Conservation in Landscaping Act.

3 SEC. 63.3. Definitions.

4 The terms used in this ordinance have the meaning set forth below:

5 (a) Certificate of landscape completion: the document required under Section 63.6.2.

6 (b) Certified Landscape Irrigation Auditor: a person certified to perform landscape  
7 irrigation audits by an accredited academic institution, a professional trade organization or  
8 other program such as the US Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense irrigation  
9 auditor certification program and the Irrigation Association's Certified Landscape Irrigation  
10 Auditor program.

11 (c) Ecological restoration project: a project where the site is intentionally altered to  
12 establish a defined, indigenous, historic ecosystem.

13 (d) First certificate of occupancy: either a temporary certificate of occupancy or a  
14 Certificate of Final Completion and Occupancy as defined in San Francisco Building Code  
15 Section 109A, whichever is issued first.

16 (e) First construction document: the first building permit issued for a project or, in the  
17 case of a site permit, the first building permit addendum issued or other document that  
18 authorizes construction of the project. "First construction document" shall not include permits  
19 or addenda for demolition, grading, shoring, pile driving, or site preparation work.

20 (f) General Manager: the General Manager of the Public Utilities Commission, or his or  
21 her designee.

22 (g) Irrigation audit: an in-depth evaluation of the performance of an irrigation system  
23 conducted by a Certified Landscape Irrigation Auditor. An irrigation audit includes, but is not  
24 limited to: inspection, system test with distribution uniformity or emission uniformity,  
25 precipitation rates, reporting deficiencies in the system, reporting overspray or runoff that

1 causes overland flow, and preparation of an irrigation schedule. An irrigation audit may  
2 include suggested upgrades, current estimated water usage, and suggested system  
3 upgrades.

4 (h) Landscape area: all the planting areas, turf areas, and water features in a  
5 landscape design plan subject to the Maximum Applied Water Allowance calculation,  
6 including any adjacent planted areas in the public right-of-way for which the property owner is  
7 responsible pursuant to the Section 400.1 and Section 805 of the Public Works Code. The  
8 landscape area does not include footprints of buildings or structures unless the footprints  
9 include planted areas such as green roofs. The landscape area also does not include  
10 sidewalks, driveways, parking lots, decks, patios, gravel or stone walks, other pervious or  
11 non-pervious hardscapes, and other non-irrigated areas designated for non-development  
12 such as open spaces and existing native vegetation.

13 (i) Landscape documentation deadline: the date by which Tier 1 or Tier 2  
14 documentation must be submitted for approval by the General Manager. This date shall be a  
15 specified number of days after the issuance of the first construction document as determined  
16 by the General Manager and in consultation with the Department of Building Inspection.

17 (j) Landscape rehabilitation project or rehabilitated landscape: includes any  
18 modifications to landscape areas over a 12-month period at a site that cumulatively exceeds  
19 1,000 square feet. A landscape rehabilitation project or rehabilitated landscape does not  
20 include turf replacements on sports fields where the turf replaced provides a playing surface,  
21 routine weeding, brush removal where no new plant materials are installed, or seasonal  
22 plantings in areas dedicated solely to edible plants.

23 (k) Low water use plants or climate appropriate plants: plants, shrubs, groundcovers or  
24 tree species that meet at least one of the following conditions:  
25

1 (1) The species has a water use ranking of "low" or "very low" in Region 1  
2 (North-Central Coast) as established in the California Department of Water Resources 2000  
3 publication "Water Use Classification of Landscape Species" or subsequent editions as it may  
4 be updated.

5 (2) The species has a water use ranking of "no water", "little water," or "little to  
6 moderate water" in the climate zone for the planting location as established in the Sunset  
7 Western Garden Book, Eighth Edition, published by Oxmoor House on February 1, 2007 or  
8 subsequent editions as it may be updated.

9 (3) The plantings are part of an engineered stormwater management feature  
10 approved by the General Manager pursuant to the San Francisco Stormwater Design  
11 Guidelines established by the Public Utilities Commission;

12 (4) The Department of Public Works, the Recreation and Park Department, or  
13 the General Manager has determined that the species, when watered for sufficient plant  
14 health and appearance, is low water use based on the agency's experience with the species,  
15 and the agency has added the species to the Low Water Use and Climate Appropriate Plant  
16 List maintained by the General Manager;

17 (5) The species appears on the San Francisco Street Tree Species List  
18 established by the Department of Public Works Bureau of Urban Forestry;

19 (6) The planting is part of a species test approved by the Department of Public  
20 Works or the Recreation and Park Department; or

21 (7) The species has been permitted at the site by the Department Public Works  
22 or the General Manager based on wet soil conditions stemming from proximity to naturally  
23 occurring water features such as a high water table, springs, ponds, lakes, creeks, and  
24 wetlands.  
25

1 (l) Maximum Applied Water Allowance: the amount of annual applied water established  
2 by the Public Utilities Commission for a landscaped area, using state mandated formulas and  
3 accounting for local climatic conditions, that serves as an upper limit for lawful water use for  
4 irrigating landscaped areas.

5 (m) New construction landscape project: the total area of landscape in the project as  
6 defined in landscape area, and the modified landscape area for a landscape rehabilitation  
7 project.

8 (n) Project applicant: the person or entity applying for approval of a landscape project  
9 for a new construction project or a landscape rehabilitation project. A project applicant may be  
10 the property owner or his or her designee.

11 (o) Property Owner: the legal owner of a property.

12 (p) Special landscape area: an area of the landscape dedicated solely to edible plants,  
13 areas irrigated all or in part with gray water or harvested rain water, water features using only  
14 harvested rain water, and areas dedicated to active play such as parks, sports fields, golf  
15 courses, and where turf provides a playing surface.

#### 16 SEC. 63.4. Applicability

17 (a) This chapter shall apply to the following:

18 (1) Tier 1: All public agency, residential, and commercial new construction  
19 landscape projects and rehabilitated landscape projects with a modified landscape area equal  
20 to or greater than 1,000 square feet and less than 2,500 square feet;

21 (2) Tier 2: All public agency, residential and commercial new construction and  
22 rehabilitated landscape projects with a modified landscape area equal to or greater than 2,500  
23 square feet;

24 (3) The irrigation and maintenance of any landscape irrigation system in the  
25 City and County of San Francisco.

1 (b) This ordinance does not apply to:

2 (1) Registered local, state or federal historical sites where the landscape is  
3 maintained as part of the historical integrity of the site;

4 (2) Ecological restoration projects that do not require a permanent irrigation  
5 system;

6 (3) Plant collections or animal habitat areas, as part of botanical gardens,  
7 zoological gardens, and arboretums open to the public.

8 (c) The General Manager may waive some or all of the requirements of this chapter if,  
9 based on a site inspection, the General Manager determines that compliance is not feasible.

10 (d) A process for document submissions and approvals pursuant to Section 63.6.1 will  
11 be developed by the General Manager in conjunction with the Department of Building  
12 Inspection, with the purpose of administrative efficiency and effective customer service.

13 SEC. 63.5. Regulation of Landscape Irrigation Efficiency

14 (a) Landscape projects shall be installed, constructed, operated, and maintained in  
15 accordance with this chapter and the rules and regulations adopted by the Public Utilities  
16 Commission that establish limits on water consumption for the purpose of irrigating landscape  
17 areas that are part of new construction, landscape rehabilitation projects, and existing  
18 landscapes.

19 (b) Landscape projects shall be planted and irrigated efficiently by complying with water  
20 efficient design and operation requirements developed by the General Manager, including but  
21 not limited to the use of low water use plants or climate appropriate plants, restrictions on turf  
22 areas over 25% of the total landscaped area or on steep slopes, irrigation system audits,  
23 regular irrigation scheduling and maintenance practices.

1 (c) All landscape projects shall not exceed a Maximum Applied Water Allowance using  
2 the formulas developed by the General Manager for local climate conditions within the City  
3 and County of San Francisco.

4 (d) Landscape areas irrigated with graywater or harvested rain water may have a  
5 Maximum Applied Water Allowance that exceeds those for landscapes irrigated with potable  
6 water.

7 (e) The architectural guidelines of a common interest development, which include  
8 community apartment projects, condominiums, planned developments, and stock  
9 cooperatives as defined in Section 1351 of the California Civil Code, shall not prohibit or  
10 include conditions that have the effect of prohibiting the use of low water use plants as a  
11 group.

12 SEC. 63.6. Provisions for Water Efficient Landscapes for New Construction and  
13 Landscape Rehabilitation Projects

14 (a) Tier 1: Beginning January 1, 2011, project applicants for all public agency,  
15 commercial, and residential new construction landscape projects and landscape rehabilitation  
16 projects, with a modified landscape area equal to or greater than 1,000 square feet and less  
17 than 2,500 square feet, shall comply with this chapter and the rules and regulations adopted  
18 by the Public Utilities Commission.

19 (b) Tier 2: Beginning January 1, 2011, the project applicant for all public agency,  
20 commercial, and residential new construction landscape projects and landscape rehabilitation  
21 projects, with a modified landscape area equal to or greater than 2,500 square feet, or a  
22 project under Tier 1 with a turf limitation exceeding 25 percent of the landscape area, shall  
23 comply with this chapter and the rules and regulations adopted by the Public Utilities  
24 Commission.



1 (c) Beginning January 1, 2011, property owners maintaining a total irrigated landscape  
2 of 10 acres or greater may submit compliance plans for approval by the General Manager that  
3 support a programmatic approach to compliance with this chapter, rather than through the  
4 review and approval of individual landscape rehabilitation projects.

5 63.6.1. Landscape Documentation.

6 (a) Tier 1 project applicants' documentation shall be submitted for approval to the  
7 General Manager not later than the landscape documentation deadline. Tier 1 documentation  
8 shall include a project checklist describing the proposed landscape project, the selection of  
9 low water use plants or climate appropriate plants, water efficient irrigation system  
10 components, and other applicable project information as determined by the General Manager.

11 (b) Tier 2 project applicants' documentation shall be submitted for approval to the  
12 General Manager not later than the landscape documentation deadline. Tier 2 documentation  
13 shall include a Landscape Documentation Package describing the proposed landscape  
14 project that includes a landscape plan, irrigation plan, soil management report, grading plan,  
15 the calculation of the Maximum Applied Water Allowance, and other applicable project  
16 information as determined by the General Manager.

17 (c) If complete documentation for Tier 1 or Tier 2 compliance has not been submitted  
18 to the General Manager on or before the landscape documentation deadline, an address  
19 restriction shall be placed on the property such that no further construction permits or  
20 addenda shall be issued and no further inspections by the Department of Building Inspection  
21 shall occur, unless and until all landscape documentation, developed in accordance with the  
22 provisions of this chapter and the Public Utilities Commission's rules and regulations has been  
23 submitted to the General Manager for approval.

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1           SEC. 63.6.2. Certificate of Landscape Completion.

2           (a) Upon completion of a new construction landscape project or rehabilitated landscape  
3 project that requires the submittal of landscape documentation pursuant to Section 63.6.1, the  
4 project applicant shall submit a Certificate of Landscape Completion for review and approval  
5 by the General Manager.

6           (b) No City department shall approve or issue a first certificate of occupancy or  
7 landscape project completion authorization or approval for any site where Tier 1 or Tier 2  
8 compliance is required, unless and until the landscape documentation pursuant to Section  
9 63.6.1 and a Certificate of Landscape Completion, developed in accordance with the  
10 provisions of this chapter and the Public Utilities Commission's rules and regulations, has  
11 been approved by the General Manager. The General Manager may authorize issuance of a  
12 first certificate of occupancy prior to approval of a Certificate of Landscape Completion,  
13 subject to conditions determined by the General Manager.

14           SEC. 63.7. Water Waste Prevention.

15           (a) This section shall apply to all landscaped areas in the City and County of San  
16 Francisco.

17           (b) Water runoff leaving the landscape area due to low head drainage, overspray,  
18 broken irrigation hardware, or other similar conditions where water flows onto adjacent  
19 property, walks, roadways, parking lots, structures, or non-irrigated areas designated for non-  
20 development such as open spaces and existing native vegetation, is prohibited.

21           SEC. 63.7.1. Irrigation Audits for Landscape Areas.

22           (a) When required by the General Manager, the project applicant or property owner,  
23 whichever is deemed appropriate by the General Manager, shall conduct an irrigation audit  
24 through a certified landscape irrigation auditor.

1 (1) Following the findings and recommendations of the certified landscape  
2 irrigation auditor, the project applicant or property owner shall perform adjustments to the  
3 irrigation usage, irrigation hardware, or landscape materials to reduce irrigation water use and  
4 to bring the irrigation systems in compliance with the applicable Maximum Applied Water  
5 Allowance, as directed by the General Manager.

6 SEC 63.8. Enforcement.

7 The property owner or project applicant, where appropriate, shall be subject to  
8 enforcement for violation of any provision of this chapter, in accordance with Chapter 100 of  
9 the San Francisco Administrative Code, and any other available legal remedies, at the sole  
10 discretion of the General Manager.

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13 APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
14 DENNIS J. HERRERA, City Attorney

15 By:

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17 John Roddy  
18 Deputy City Attorney  
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**City and County of San Francisco**  
**Tails**  
**Ordinance**

City Hall  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

**File Number:** 101079

**Date Passed:** November 23, 2010

Ordinance amending the San Francisco Administrative Code by repealing Chapter 63 in its entirety and adding a new Chapter 63, requiring the development and maintenance of landscape irrigation controls for specified new construction landscapes and landscape rehabilitation projects.

November 08, 2010 Land Use and Economic Development Committee - RECOMMENDED

November 16, 2010 Board of Supervisors - PASSED ON FIRST READING

Ayes: 10 - Alioto-Pier, Avalos, Campos, Chiu, Chu, Daly, Dufty, Mar, Maxwell and Mirkarimi  
Noes: 1 - Elsbernd

November 23, 2010 Board of Supervisors - FINALLY PASSED

Ayes: 10 - Alioto-Pier, Avalos, Campos, Chiu, Chu, Daly, Dufty, Mar, Maxwell and Mirkarimi  
Noes: 1 - Elsbernd

File No. 101079

I hereby certify that the foregoing Ordinance was FINALLY PASSED on 11/23/2010 by the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco.

Mayor Gavin Newsom

Angela Calvillo  
Clerk of the Board

December 3, 2010

Date Approved