



News from EMWD

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For Immediate Release

Eastern Municipal Water District to launch and enforce “Stop Runoff” Program

Program backed by revised ordinance requiring water efficient landscapes in new development and assessing penalties for water waste (runoff)

Perris, CA (May 16, 2008)—On Wednesday, the EMWD Board approved and authorized a revision to its existing Water Use Efficiency Ordinance as another means of providing long-term water reliability for existing and future customers through enhanced water use efficiency measures. The District’s new “Stop Runoff” program, effective September 1, 2008, requires water efficient landscapes in new development and notifies and penalizes existing customers for water waste due to runoff.

“These efforts are intended to increase public awareness that water is too precious to waste on runoff and thirsty landscapes,” said EMWD Board President David J. Slawson. The new ordinance supports EMWD’s objective to “*Promote efficient use of water and implement a structured conservation program.*”

Previously, EMWD has encouraged water-efficient landscaping and enforced water waste restrictions for commercial, industrial and institutional accounts through development of the County of Riverside’s Ordinance 859 for water efficient landscape standards for new development; rebate and grant programs; landscaping water audits; water budgets; water waste (runoff) notifications; and penalties for water budget violations. In 2007, approximately \$500,000 was assessed for water budget violations. EMWD has also worked with cities in its service area to notify them of water waste (runoff) occurring in their rights of way and to encourage the use of water-efficient landscaping techniques for public areas.

“With all these efforts we’ve taken so far to set a good example,” Slawson added, “we expect cities and local water agencies will enact requirements or policies as stringent as in our new ordinance. One of the important factors we hear frequently from builders is that they want to do the right thing, but it’s difficult when every local agency sets different standards. This ordinance, coupled with the county’s Landscaping Ordinance 859, can provide that consistency.”

Often, more than half the water consumed by customers is for irrigation, and a majority of that irrigation is excessive. The revised Water Use Efficiency Ordinance encourages existing and future customers to make water efficiency a permanent way of life. EMWD’s ordinance stipulates that:

- Water efficient landscaping is required for all new development, including the front and back yards of new homes and common areas. Water efficient landscapes designed with appropriate plant materials and efficient irrigation devices ensure their ability to comply with an annual water budget.
 - Previously, this applied only to large landscapes (3,000 square feet or larger)
- All customers seen wasting water with runoff will be notified and subject to penalties. (Water may not pool or collect to the point of running off the property, i.e. water running onto another property, walkway, driveway and/or street).
 - Previously, penalties only applied to commercial, industrial and institutional accounts when water budgets were exceeded.

Starting September 1, 2008, residential customers who receive three or more violations for water waste within a calendar year will have a penalty added to their water bill. Violations of the ordinance restrictions are cumulative over a 12-month period with penalties as follows:

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| 1 st violation: | The District will issue a written warning. |
| 2 nd violation: | The District shall issue a final written warning. |
| 3 rd violation: | A \$100 surcharge will be added to the customer's water bill. |
| 4 th violation: | A \$200 surcharge will be added to the customer's water bill. |
| 5 th and subsequent violations: | A \$300 surcharge will be added to the customer's water bill. |

Any money collected from penalties will be dedicated to funding conservation programs. Customers may appeal violations. However, customers are to pay water bills, penalties, and non-compliance charges in accordance with due dates. If an appeal is upheld in favor of the customer, appropriate monies may be refunded.

Customers can review EMWD's Ordinance 72.23 by logging onto www.usewaterwisely.org. Customers will also find links to "Tips to Eliminate Runoff" and "Rebates" for such devices as a Smart Irrigation Controller and Rotating Sprinkler Nozzles for Spray Heads. The controller is a useful tool for setting appropriate irrigation run times and frequency based on specific plants, soils, site conditions, and time of year. The sprinkler nozzle turns a standard sprinkler head into a precision device that uses 20 percent less water, by applying water more slowly and uniformly than conventional sprays and rotors, which can help customers to eliminate runoff onto streets and sidewalks.

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EMWD is the freshwater, wastewater service and recycled water provider to a 555-square mile area from Moreno Valley southward along the I-215 corridor to Temecula and eastward to Hemet and San Jacinto. Approximately 660,000 people live and work in this area. In addition to its own water customers, EMWD supplements water to eight local water agencies and municipalities that have their own water departments. EMWD operates four water reclamation facilities and treats some 45 million gallons of wastewater daily. More information can be found at EMWD's web site www.emwd.org.