



Frequently Asked Questions About Water Conservation in Morgan Hill



The City of Morgan Hill has a long history of leadership in ensuring that water is used efficiently. Water is always a precious resource in Morgan Hill and with this in mind, our permanent watering restrictions are in place to best manage the City's potable water supply. These restrictions will help us avoid or minimize the effects of drought, climate change and the unreliability of imported water infrastructure that serves the City of Morgan Hill. Thank you to the Morgan Hill community for continuing your significant water conservation efforts. You are making a difference!

This document answers many frequently asked questions about the permanent water conservation measures that are always in effect.

What are the current rules related to irrigation?

- From November 1, 2025 – February 28, 2026, irrigation shall occur only one (1) day a week:
 - All addresses only water on Wednesdays
 - Irrigation shall only be scheduled before 9 AM or after 7 PM
 - Each station, valve, or zone shall run for a maximum of 15 minutes in any one day
 - Irrigation shall not cause excessive flow or runoff to go onto the sidewalk or into the gutter
 - No watering of Non-Functional Turf at commercial, industrial, and institutional properties
 - Excessive use, loss or escape of water through breaks, leaks or other malfunctions in the water user's plumbing or distribution system for any period of time after such escape of water should have reasonably been discovered and corrected and in no event more than ten (10) days of receiving written notice from the City, is prohibited.

Are there other rules in place? Yes, the City has a number of permanent limitations on water use that are always in effect. These address nineteen specific areas and are listed on the attached sheet.

Do the rules apply to wells? Yes. The Water Waste Ordinance applies to the use of any potable water in the City.

What about drip irrigation....can it be set for over fifteen minutes? Yes, high-efficiency irrigation systems, like drip, are not limited to fifteen minute per day run times. These systems (*those that produce no more than 2 gallons of water per hour*) may also operate on any day of the week, but still must not run between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.

What about when it's raining? Watering or irrigating within 48 hours after ¼ inch or more of precipitation is received is prohibited. Remember to turn off irrigation systems when rain is in the forecast.

Can I fill my pool? Yes. Please note that keeping your pool covered reduces water loss and therefore, your water expenses. All new pools built after September 2, 2015 require the provision of a pool cover.

What is Non-Functional Turf? Non-functional turf is defined as lawn grass area that are solely for decorative purposes. The watering ban of non-function turf applies to Commercial, Industrial, and Institutional properties (*this includes HOAs, apartments, condominiums, townhomes, and others*). Some examples of Non-Functional Turf include, but is not limited to, streetscape, mow strips, turf that is solely ornamental, and other turf that is not functional. Some examples of Functional Turf include turf grass used for recreational purposes, civic or community events, turf on the property of single-family homes, and turf on a sports field. Learn more at <https://www.morganhill.ca.gov/2357/Commercial-Watering-Ban-for-Non-Function>.

If I plant new plants on a non-watering day, can I water them? Since irrigation rules do not apply to irrigating by hand whether by a hose or bucket, residents planting new plants on non-watering days can water them by hand and still be in compliance with the City's ordinance. Running sprinkler systems, however, is not allowed on non-watering days. This does not apply to watering or irrigating a newly installed or significantly rehabilitated landscape for the first sixty days after the first plant is placed in the ground. A significantly rehabilitated landscape is a landscape in which 25% or more of a property's landscape is replaced.

Can I wash my car? Using potable water to wash or clean a vehicle, including but not limited to, any automobile, truck, van, bus, boat or trailer, whether motorized or not, is prohibited except by use of a handheld bucket or similar container, or with a hand-held hose with a positive self-closing water shut-off nozzle or device.

Does this apply to commercial car washes? No, this does not apply to commercial car washing facilities that utilize a recirculating water system to capture or reuse water.

My neighbor is wasting water. What should I do? While residents can always inform other residents about the City's water waste rules, we realize that not everyone is comfortable doing so. There are two ways to report water waste to the City.

1. Call the Water Waste Hotline at (408) 310-4195
2. Report On-line on the City's Website
 - a. Go to morganhill.ca.gov
 - b. Select the "How Can I?" button (blue bar on the left hand side of the home page)
 - c. Select the "Report Water Waste" or "Report Water Leak" form and complete the few questions
 - d. Click submit to file the form

Where can I see the City's full ordinance? The full ordinance is available on the City's website at <https://www.morganhill.ca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/21483/Ordinance-No-2342-Water-Waste-PDF?bidid=>

Permanent Water Waste Rules in Morgan Hill

The provisions of this chapter do not apply to the use of water by commercial nurseries and commercial growers to sustain plants, trees, shrubs, crops or other vegetation intended for commercial sale, to the use of water in a community garden providing garden plots to the public, or to home fruit and vegetable gardens less than 200 square feet.

1. **Limits on Watering Hours:** Watering or irrigating of lawn, landscape or other vegetated area with potable water is prohibited between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Pacific Standard/Daylight Savings Time on any day, except by use of a hand-held bucket or similar container, a hand-held hose equipped with a positive self-closing water shut-off nozzle or device, or for very short periods of time for the express purpose of adjusting or repairing an irrigation system. Watering or irrigating within 48 hours after $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or more of precipitation is received is prohibited.
2. **Limit on Watering Duration:** Watering or irrigating of lawn, landscape or other vegetated area with potable water using a landscape irrigation system or a watering device that is not continuously attended is limited to no more than fifteen (15) minutes watering per day per station/valve/zone. This subsection does not apply to landscape irrigation stations/valves/zones that exclusively use drip type irrigation systems, soaker hoses, bubblers, or high efficiency sprinkler nozzles that have a precipitation rate of less than two (2) gallons per hour; to systems controlled by weather-based irrigation controllers; and systems having stream rotor sprinklers with a 70% or greater efficiency standard.
3. **Limit on Watering Days:** Limit on Watering Days: During the months of March through October, watering or irrigating of lawn, landscape or other vegetated area with potable water is limited to three days per week on a schedule established and posted by the city. During the months of November through February, watering or irrigating of lawn, landscape or other vegetated area with potable water is limited to no more than one day per week on a schedule established and posted by the city. This provision does not apply to the following uses of water:
 - a. To landscape irrigation zones that exclusively use very low flow drip type irrigation systems when no emitter produces more than two (2) gallons of water per hour;
 - b. To watering or irrigating by use of a hand-held bucket or similar container, a handheld hose equipped with a positive self-closing water shut-off nozzle or device, or for very short periods of time for the express purpose of adjusting or repairing an irrigation system;
 - c. To landscape irrigation zones that are controlled by an activated weather-based irrigation controller;
 - d. To watering or irrigating a newly installed or significantly rehabilitated landscape for the first sixty days after the first plant is placed in the ground. For the purposes of this section, a significantly rehabilitated landscape is a landscape in which 25% or more of a property's landscape is replaced.
4. **Watering of Turf:** Potable water shall not be applied to Non-Functional Turf at commercial, industrial or institutional sites (CII Properties), including Homeowner's Association-owned property and common areas of mobile home parks, and apartment, condominium, and townhome complexes. The use of potable water on turf is not prohibited to the extent necessary to ensure the health of trees and other perennial non-turf plantings or to the extent necessary to address immediate health and safety, sanitation, or fire protection needs as determined by the fire marshal. Unless otherwise permitted by the fire marshal, all watering permitted must be completed in a manner that prevents runoff.
5. **No Excessive Water Flow or Runoff:** Watering or irrigating of any lawn, landscape or other vegetated area in a manner that causes or allows excessive water flow or runoff onto an adjoining sidewalk, driveway, street, alley, gutter or ditch is prohibited.
6. **No Washing Down Hard or Paved Surfaces:** Washing down hard or paved surfaces, including but not limited to sidewalks, walkways, driveways, parking areas, tennis courts, patios or alleys, is prohibited except when necessary to alleviate safety or sanitary hazards, and then only by use of a hand-held bucket or similar container, a hand-held hose equipped with a positive self-closing water shut-off device, a low-volume, high-pressure cleaning machine equipped to recycle any water used, or a low-volume high-pressure water broom. Washing down structures, fences, and hard surfaces expressly for the purposes of preparing a surface for the application of a surface coating is not prohibited provided it does not occur more than one time in any twelve (12) month period.

7. **Obligation to Fix Leaks, Breaks or Malfunctions:** Excessive use, loss or escape of water through breaks, leaks or other malfunctions in the water user's plumbing or distribution system for any period of time after such escape of water should have reasonably been discovered and corrected and in no event more than ten (10) days of receiving written notice from the city, is prohibited.
8. **Recirculating Water Required for Water Fountains and Decorative Water Features:** Operating a water fountain or other decorative water feature that does not use recirculated water is prohibited.
9. **Limits on Washing Vehicles:** Using water to wash or clean a vehicle, including but not limited to any automobile, truck, van, bus, motorcycle, boat or trailer, whether motorized or not is prohibited, except by use of a hand-held bucket or similar container or a hand-held hose equipped with a positive self-closing water shut-off nozzle or device. This subsection does not apply to any commercial car washing facility that incorporates a recycled or recirculating water system in its operation.
10. **Drinking Water Served Upon Request Only:** Eating or drinking establishments, including but not limited to a restaurant, hotel, cafe, cafeteria, bar, or other public place where food or drinks are sold, served, or offered for sale, are prohibited from providing drinking water to any person unless expressly requested.
11. **Commercial Lodging Establishments Must Provide Guests Option to Decline Daily Linen Services:** Hotels, motels and other commercial lodging establishments must provide customers the option of not having towels and linen laundered daily. Commercial lodging establishments must prominently display notice of this option in each bathroom using clear and easily understood language.
12. **No Installation of Single Pass Cooling Systems:** Installation of single pass cooling systems is prohibited in buildings requesting new water service.
13. **No Installation of Nonrecirculating in Commercial Car Wash and Laundry Systems:** Installation of nonrecirculating water systems is prohibited in new commercial conveyor car wash and new commercial laundry systems.
14. **Restaurants Required to Use Water Conserving Dish Wash Spray Valves:** Food preparation establishments, such as restaurants or cafes, are prohibited from using non-water conserving dish wash spray valves.
15. **Commercial Car Wash Systems:** All commercial conveyor car wash systems must have installed operational recirculating water systems or must have a waiver of this requirement from the city.
16. **Construction Activities:** Use of potable water for construction site dust control, compaction, and other site activities suitable for non-potable water is prohibited if recycled water is available within five miles of the construction site.
17. **Plumbing System Testing:** Use of potable water for plumbing system testing is prohibited unless required by law or alternative testing procedures are determined to be unsuitable by City inspection staff.
18. **Pool Covers:** Constructing a pool without the inclusion of a pool cover is prohibited. All contracts for the construction of a new pool entered into after September 2, 2015, shall include the provision of a pool cover.
19. **Wells:** New private water wells are prohibited.