

Cemetery Maintenance During Drought

INFORMATION FOR CONSUMERS
AND CEMETERIES

THE BUREAU IS HERE TO HELP.
PLEASE CONTACT US FOR ASSISTANCE:



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In response to California's ongoing drought, Governor Brown's April 1, 2015, Executive Order required the State Water Resources Control Board to immediately implement water efficiency measures to reduce potable water usage at commercial, institutional, and industrial properties, including cemeteries, to result in a Statewide 25 percent reduction in potable water usage through February 28, 2016. Regulations to meet this requirement can be found on the State Water Resources Control Board website, www.waterboards.ca.gov.

California's drought affects everyone. California cities, towns, counties, residents, and businesses—cemeteries included—must follow Governor Brown's Executive Order to conserve water. This means the cemetery you visit may look a little different than it usually does. In this brochure, the Department of Consumer Affairs' Cemetery and Funeral Bureau (Bureau) offers information for consumers on what they can expect from the Bureau and the cemeteries it licenses. It also offers best practices for cemeteries on how to maintain their grounds and inform consumers of their drought-related practices and restrictions.





Because cemeteries may obtain water from different sources, the appearance of their lawns and landscaping may differ from one property to another. The water efficiency measures that cemeteries must implement may result in less fertile landscaping and impact the appearance of the property. The Bureau recognizes that this will occur as the State continues its vital water conservation efforts.

Here is water restriction information regarding cemeteries licensed by the Bureau:

- Cemeteries that use recycled or reclaimed water are not restricted.
- Cemeteries with a “self-sufficient” water supply (i.e., well) are required to reduce their potable water usage by 25 percent or limit outdoor irrigation with potable water to no more than two days per week.
- Cemeteries that receive their water from another source (an urban water supplier or a water utility regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission) must comply with water efficiency measures implemented by their local water provider.

WHAT CONSUMERS CAN EXPECT

Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations (CCR) section 2333 (b)(3) reads as follows:

“Each endowment care cemetery shall perform, at a minimum, the following maintenance on its cemetery property ... Provide a sufficient supply of water to keep cemetery grass and plants as green as seasonably possible in accordance with natural terrain, availability of water, and local or county ordinances regarding water use.”

- The Bureau will continue to inspect and monitor cemeteries for compliance with CCR section 2333 (b)(3), considering the watering restrictions applicable to the cemetery.
- Watering restrictions may be different from one county to another; therefore, restrictions for cemeteries may differ from one location to another.
- The Bureau is dedicated to working with individual cemeteries based on any applicable watering restrictions for their property.
- The Bureau will assess compliance on a case-by-case basis based on the watering restrictions at individual properties.
- Cemeteries are expected to comply with all State or local requirements regarding water use.
- The Bureau will consider cemeteries complying with watering restriction requirements to be in compliance with the maintenance standard regulations with regard to CCR 2333 (b)(3).
- Since the restrictions do not prohibit all irrigation, cemeteries irrigating less than the restrictions imposed by either State or local law(s) may be found to be in violation of CCR 2333 (b)(3) maintenance standard.

RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES FOR LICENSED CEMETERIES

- Keep a copy of the local watering restrictions applicable to your specific cemetery on hand and share that information with visitors to the cemetery.
- Post a copy of the watering schedule at your cemetery office or other visible location so consumers are aware of your watering schedule.
- Educate consumers about the California drought and watering restrictions through signage, websites, and handouts.
- Ensure that irrigation systems are operational, and consider using such tools as tree wells, weather-controlled timers, and less frequent watering.
- Consider replacing grass with drought-tolerant landscaping and/or artificial turf.
- Replace spray nozzles with drip irrigation lines in garden beds.
- Explore types of fertilizers, soil additives, or surface-active agents that may minimize the need for water.

NOTE: These are “best practices” and are not established laws or regulations; they may or may not be practical alternatives for all cemeteries.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT THE BUREAU’S WEBSITE AT WWW.CFB.CA.GOV OR CONTACT THE BUREAU AT (916) 574-7870.

The Cemetery and Funeral Bureau licenses, regulates, and investigates complaints against California funeral establishments, funeral directors, embalmers, apprentice embalmers, cemetery brokers, cemetery salespersons, cemetery managers, cremated remains disposers, crematories, crematory managers, and the nearly 200 fraternal and private cemeteries in the State.

NOTE: The State does not license cemeteries operated by religious organizations; cities, counties, or cemetery districts; the military; Native American tribal organizations; or other groups. If you don’t know who regulates the cemetery you’re interested in, ask the cemetery manager.

