

# Water Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

It is important for you to know that we take our customers' concerns very seriously. We feel that you would not be calling if there wasn't cause for concern. We investigate very claim fully and in a timely manner before closing a case. Below are some answers to the most frequently asked questions or concerns. You may find that this information solves your issue but please feel free to call if you feel it does not. Our office number is 916-354-3700.

## 1. **What is the State's Emergency Drought Regulation?**

**Answer:** On April 1, 2015, Governor Brown issued an Executive Order mandating a statewide 25% reduction in potable urban water use. In response to the Executive Order, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) recently issued draft emergency regulations that address three (3) different categories of regulation: urban water suppliers, small water suppliers, and additional prohibitions and end-user requirements. Rancho Murieta Community Services District (District) is a small water supplier and must follow that category of regulations when adopted.

Currently, the SWRCB draft emergency regulations require small water suppliers to either limit outdoor irrigation to no more than two (2) days per week or implement other mandatory conservation measures intended to achieve a 25% reduction in water consumption. In addition, small water suppliers will be subject to a new reporting requirement to report either total potable water production by month for June through November 2015 and by month for June through November 2013; or confirm by report the limitation of outdoor irrigation to two (2) days per week. The District has been on a mandatory restriction of two (2) days per week for outdoor irrigation since September 2014, placing the District in compliance with SWRCB regulations.

The Governor's Executive Order also requires the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to lead a statewide initiative, in partnership with local agencies, to collectively replace 50 million square feet of lawns and ornamental turf with drought tolerant landscapes. The District is watching for information from DWR on "cash for grass" rebate programs and other grant opportunities to assist Rancho Murieta residents in meeting the mandated conservation targets.

## 2. **Is Rancho Murieta complying with the State's two (2) day a week watering schedule?**

**Answer:** The District has been on a mandatory restriction of two (2) days per week for outdoor irrigation since September 2014, placing the District in compliance with SWRCB regulations.

## 3. **Will the current mandated watering schedule kill my lawn?**

**Answer:** Although your lawn may brown significantly, depending on the weather, it should only go dormant and the roots should remain alive. There are resources available on the internet that discuss this, such as <http://www.wikihow.com/Save-Water-with-a-Sleeping-Lawn>

**4. Will previous water violation tags in 2014 count towards this continued conservation plan in 2015?**

**Answer:** No, conservation tagging had been reset at the beginning of the new year.

**5. Can Rancho Murieta Association (RMA) fine me for my lawn turning brown?**

**Answer:** Per an Executive Order from the Governor, no homeowner association (HOA) may fine members as a result of water conservation due to the continuing statewide drought. See link below for more information:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board\\_decisions/adopted\\_orders/resolutions/2015/rs20150013.pdf](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/board_decisions/adopted_orders/resolutions/2015/rs20150013.pdf)

**6. Can I hand water?**

**Answer:** Yes, as long as from a source or hose that causes water to shut off immediately when not in use and is in compliance with all other code and regulations. Manually running sprinklers *is not* hand watering. Drip irrigation is allowed.

**7. Can I wash my car?**

**Answer:** Yes, as long as runoff is not created and the hose used is fixed with a shut off valve that immediately stops dispensing water when not in use.

**8. Do you promote water conservation with rebates?**

**Answer:** Yes. We offer the following rebates:

- High efficiency Toilets	\$100
- High efficiency Clothes Washer	\$125
- Weather based controller	\$100
- Water Pressure Reducing Valve	\$100
- Hot Water Recirculation Pump	\$100
- Drip system rebate	\$50
- Rotator Head Sprinkler	\$50

**9. Do you offer a “Cash for Grass” rebate?**

**Answer:** The Governor’s Executive Order also requires the Department of Water Resources (DWR) to lead a statewide initiative, in partnership with local agencies, to collectively replace 50 million square feet of lawns and ornamental turf with drought tolerant landscapes. The District is watching for information from DWR on “cash for grass” rebate programs and other grant opportunities to assist Rancho Murieta residents in meeting the mandated conservation targets.

**10. Why is Rancho Murieta Country Club (RMCC) not following the irrigation schedule?**

**Answer:** Rancho Murieta Country Club uses **recycled water** for their irrigation needs. Recycled water is produced from the tertiary wastewater treatment process, filtered and disinfected, before irrigation use, not produced from the Water Treatment Plant. Recycled water use does not fall under the conservation mandates.

**11. Why is the Rancho Murieta Association (RMA) not following the irrigation schedule?**

**Answer:** In the areas along Laguna Joaquin, the North Gate, the North Parkway, and Clementia Park, RMA uses **raw water** for their irrigation needs. Raw water is water that has not been treated through the Water Treatment Plant. In areas where they use potable water, they must adhere to the irrigation schedule.

**12. Is there a specific law governing the landscape water in California?**

**Answer:** Yes. Department of Water Resources' (DWR) [Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance](#) reflects the State policy of promoting conservation and efficient use of water in landscapes.

**What are the objectives of DWR's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance?**

**Answer:** The objectives are:

- To promote the values and benefits of landscapes while recognizing the need to invest water and other resources as efficiently as possible.
- To establish a structure for planning, designing, installing maintaining and managing water efficient landscapes in new and rehabilitated projects.
- To establish provisions for water management practices and water waste prevention for established landscapes.
- Use water efficiently without waste by setting a Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA) as an upper limit for water use and reduce water use to the lowest practical amount.

**13. My sprinklers are causing water to run off and flood the gutters, what can I do?**

**Answer:** Run the irrigation in multiple short intervals to allow the water to soak in vs. running into the gutter. For example, if an irrigation station was running 12 minutes and causing runoff, change the irrigation controller to run in three 4 minute cycles an hour apart to allow the water to soak in.

**14. What rules does the District have set up for water conservation?**

**Answer:** District Code, Chapter 14, Water Code.

**15. Do we have hard water?**

**Answer:** No, at less than 20 mg/L (milligrams per liter) Rancho Murieta water is on the low end of soft water. General guideline for classification of water are: 0 to 60 mg/L as calcium carbonate is classified as soft; 61 to 120 mg/L as moderately hard; 121 to 180 mg/L as hard; and more than 180 mg/L as very hard.

**16. Why is my tap water milky or cloudy?**

**Answer:** This is caused by tiny air bubbles in the water. It is completely harmless. Cold water from snowmelt has the potential to hold lots of air. As the water warms a bit on its way to your tap, it has more potential to release that air. When you turn on your tap, the rapid reduction in pressure causes the air to come out of solution, and creates the milky look you see. If this is the case, it will clear before your eyes.

**17. How do I know my water is safe?**

**Answer:** Distribution operators and treatment plant operators certified by the State Water Resources Control Board collect hundreds of bacteriological samples each year throughout the water distribution systems as well as performing thousands of individual tests in the treatment facilities and in the distribution system, of which only the detected constituents are found in your annual Consumer Confidence Report. Field tests for things like temperature, turbidity, pH and chlorine residual help to let us know that our water is maintaining its equality throughout the distribution system.

**18. Is there Fluoride in my water?**

**Answer:** The District does not fluoridate its water.

**19. My water smells like Chlorine!**

**Answer:** Chlorine is required in the distribution system to keep bacteria from making it to your tap. We regulate our Chlorine dosage very strictly so that we have just enough without having too much. The maximum residual level of Chlorine is 4mg/L (milligrams per liter), and a common level for our system is between 0.5 and 1.5 mg/L. Some people are more sensitive to the smell of Chlorine in water. It is common for people to think that the level of the Chlorine must be too high under these circumstances; however, we have found that the most common reason for smelling Chlorine at your tap is when the Chlorine dissipating or the level is dropping. The reason for this is that the water sits in your plumbing before you use it. Most likely, if you flush your taps out, the smell will disappear.

**20. How is my water treated?**

**Answer:** Your water is treated by conventional methods, utilizing coagulation, flocculation, sedimentation, filtration, and finally disinfection. The facility or facilities serving your area are operated by State Water Resources Control Board certified operators. It may also be comforting to you to know that our facilities have built-in fail-safes which will immediately shut the treatment process down and not allow any water to the system if something within the facility is not operating correctly. The operators receive alarms for immediate intervention so they can correct the problem and begin treating water again.

**21. My water tastes like chemicals.**

**Answer:** Another common call we get is that the water has a strong chemical taste all of the sudden. Most times, this can be traced to either the Chlorine topic covered earlier or to a hose bib being left on. This is most common during warm times of the year when the hot sun beats down on a pressurized host and creates backpressure. When you open a tap inside the house, you can be sure that high pressure host water feeds right into your house and it does not taste very good. The best way to avoid this is to always shut your hose off at the hose bib shut-off valve and depressurize your hose.

**22. Why are there pink or dark stains in my toilet or around my drains?**

**Answer:** Airborne organisms are usually the cause. You will see grey, black, or sometime pink filmy stains on surfaces that are regularly moist, including toilet bowls, shower heads, shower drains, sink drains, dishwashers, shower and bath floors and walls. These organisms are not in

the drinking water but they find most areas of your house to thrive. The only way to control these organisms is to disinfect the surfaces regularly and ventilate the area well.

**22. My water is dirty.**

**Answer:** It is actually very common for people to experience discolored or “dirty” water at their tap. In most cases, we can trace this condition to a particular aspect of the household plumbing. It is very common for a water heater to corrode or rust and cause discolored water in the hot water. You can test this by turning your tap to the full hot position and observe whether the water is discolored. If the water is discolored in your hot water, but not cold water, you can be reasonably certain the issue lies in your water heater. If the problem occurs in the cold water as well, and does not clear up after running for a few minutes, we may need to flush the main line. If you get discolored water out of your cold water tap and it clears up after running for several minutes, the main line is likely clean and you may have a plumbing fixture or an old galvanized line causing the problem.