



CITY OF RED BLUFF

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California Green Building Code Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance

The Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELo) is a California state regulation which has become part of the Building Code, and it is designed to prevent water from being wasted on irrigated landscapes. The MWELo was enacted in 1993 from the 1990 Water Conservation and Landscaping Act and was updated in 2015 at the height of the drought. The City of Red Bluff has adopted the MWELo as a City Ordinance (see next page).

What is the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance?

The MWELo establishes a structure for planning, designing, installing, maintaining, and managing water efficient landscapes in new construction and rehabilitated landscaping. Overall, the MWELo seeks to ensure that landscapes promote water efficiency, soil health, stormwater management, and erosion control. The full Ordinance text, along with other helpful resources, can be found at the Department of Water Resource's website.

<https://water.ca.gov/Programs/Water-Use-And-Efficiency/Urban-Water-Use-Efficiency/Model-Water-Efficient-Landscape-Ordinance>.

Which projects are subject to MWELo?

MWELo applies to any landscaping project greater than 500 square feet that requires a permit, plan check or design review. It also applies to existing landscape rehabilitation projects with a total landscaped area greater than 2,500 square feet.

Submittal Requirements

Four copies of the following reports/plans shall be submitted with the Building/Planning application packet:

1. Landscape Design Plan
2. Irrigation Design Plan
3. Grading Design Plan (as applicable)
4. MWELo Project Information Form (only one copy of this needed; see last page)

You may contact the Red Bluff Building Department at (530) 527-2605 ext. 3058 with any questions.

The City of Red Bluff is an equal opportunity provider

§ 18A.44 MODEL WATER EFFICIENT LANDSCAPING ORDINANCE REQUIREMENTS.

(A) Property owners or their building or landscape designers, including anyone requiring a building or planning permit, plan check, or landscape design review from the jurisdiction, who are constructing a new (single-family, multi-family, public, institutional, or commercial) project with a landscape area greater than 500 square feet, or rehabilitating an existing landscape with a total landscape area greater than 2,500 square feet, shall comply with Sections 492.6(a)(3)(B), (C), (D), and (G) of the MWELO, including sections related to use of compost and mulch as delineated in this § [18A.44](#).

(B) The following compost and mulch use requirements that are part of the MWELO are now also included as requirements of this article. Other requirements of the MWELO are in effect and can be found in 23 CCR, Division 2, Chapter 2.7.

(C) Property owners or their building or landscape designers that meet the threshold for MWELO compliance outlined in § [18A.44](#)(A) above shall:

(1) Comply with Sections 492.6(a)(3)(B), (C), (D) and (G) of the MWELO, which requires the submittal of a landscape design plan with a soil preparation, mulch, and amendments section to include the following:

(a) For landscape installations, compost at a rate of a minimum of four cubic yards per 1,000 square feet of permeable area shall be incorporated to a depth of six inches into the soil. Soils with greater than 6% organic matter in the top six inches of soil are exempt from adding compost and tilling.

(b) For landscape installations, a minimum three-inch layer of mulch shall be applied on all exposed soil surfaces of planting areas except in turf areas, creeping or rooting groundcovers, or direct seeding applications where mulch is contraindicated. To provide habitat for beneficial insects and other wildlife up to 5% of the landscape area may be left without mulch. Designated insect habitat must be included in the landscape design plan as such.

(c) Organic mulch materials made from recycled or post-consumer materials shall take precedence over inorganic materials or virgin forest products unless the recycled post-consumer organic products are not locally available. Organic mulches are not required where prohibited by local fuel modification plan guidelines or other applicable local ordinances.

(2) The MWELO compliance items listed in this section are not an inclusive list of MWELO requirements; therefore, property owners or their building or landscape designers that meet the threshold for MWELO compliance outlined in § [18A.44](#)(A) shall consult the full MWELO for all requirements.

(D) If, after the adoption of this article, the California Department of Water Resources, or its successor agency, amends 23 CCR, Division 2, Chapter 2.7, Sections 492.6(a)(3)(B), (C), (D), and (G) of the MWELO September 15, 2015 requirements in a manner that requires jurisdictions to incorporate the requirements of an updated MWELO in a local ordinance, and the amended requirements include provisions more stringent than those required in this section, the revised requirements of 23 CCR, Division 2, Chapter 2.7 shall be enforced.

https://codelibrary.amlegal.com/codes/redbluff/latest/redbluff_ca/0-0-0-16976#JD_18A.44

MWELO PROJECT INFORMATION

Applicant Information

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Project

Site Address: _____

Project Type (*new dwelling, commercial, rehab*): _____

- Currently, this project does not include landscaping. I am aware that future landscape installations may be required to comply with the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO) requirements per California Code of Regulations, Title 23, Division 2, Chapter 2.7.
- This project does incorporate landscaping. (*Please provide the information below specific to the landscape area which will be completed as part of this project. Landscape plans must be submitted as part of the Building Permit application*):

Total Landscape Area (sq. ft.): _____

Turf Area (sq. ft.): _____ Non-Turf Plan Area (sq. ft.): _____

Special Landscape Area (sq. ft.): _____

Water Type (*potable, recycled, well*): _____

Name of water purveyor (*If not served by private well*): _____

Signature

I certify the above information is correct and agree to comply with the requirements of the MWELO.

Signature of property owner, project manager, or authorized representative

Date

Office Use: Building App # _____ Date landscape plans reviewed _____