



CITY OF PALMDALE

Frequently Asked Questions – Notice of Substandard Landscaping

Q. *Why did the City revise its Landscape Ordinance?*

A. State Assembly Bill 1881 required that every City in the State of California either adopt their own Water Efficient Ordinance within the guidelines provided by the Department of Water Resources, or adopt the State's ordinance by January of 2009. If a City chose to adopt the State's ordinance, it would not go into effect until January 2010. The City did not want to wait until 2010 to promote water conservation and minimize water waste.

Q. *What is a substandard landscaping lien?*

A. The City of Palmdale's Code Enforcement office is responsible for responding to complaints about substandard landscaping. When a Code Enforcement officer investigates a complaint a substandard violation may be issued to the property owner. Once issued, a lien is placed on the property, which prevents the sale of the property until such time as the violation is corrected.

Q. *How is the lien released?*

- A landscape contractor who holds a current C-27 license and a current City of Palmdale business license will be able to design and install the front yard to meet the requirements on the Water Efficient Landscape Checklist.
- Once installed, the contractor contacts the Public Works inspection line at (661) 267-5255 24 hours in advance of the inspection.
- The inspector meets the contractor at the job site to make sure the landscaping conforms to the checklist.
- The irrigation clock will be inspected, the irrigation system run for conformance and the landscaping inspected to make sure it meets the code.
- The inspector will take pictures of the landscaping; accept the signed checklist from the contractor along with a copy of the irrigation schedule.
- The inspector will then submit a copy of the completed checklist along with the pictures to the Code Enforcement office.
- Code enforcement will collect the necessary fees and release the lien.

Q. *Can the property owner or realtor bring the landscaping back to city standard once the substandard landscaping violation is issued? Example – Over seed the lawn and make it green?*

A. **No.** Once the lien is in place, the only way it can be abated is to bring the landscape into conformance with the substandard checklist available in Section VI of the Engineering design standards. Only a licensed landscape contractor with a valid C-27 license and a current City of Palmdale business license can bring the landscaping up to code.

FAQ – Notice of Substandard Landscaping

Q. *Is there a list of qualified contractors available from the City?*

A. **Yes.** There is a list available through the City of Palmdale Business License Department. The list can only be purchased at the Business License counter; please contact Business License at (661) 267-5434 for more information.

Q. *Is there an inspection fee?*

A. **Yes;** the minimum fee is \$150.00 with a redundant inspection fee of \$75.00 an hour if the property needs to be reinspected. These fees are paid to Code Enforcement along with any other fees imposed by Code Enforcement associated with the release of the violation. The Public Works inspector will notify Code Enforcement of the total inspection fees due.

Q. *Why do I have to supply a 2-year irrigation schedule if the evapotranspiration (ET) clock automatically updates the irrigation times each night?*

A. Most irrigation clocks need a base schedule entered that will then automatically adjust each night to the available ET data. The watering needs of a landscape change as the plant material matures. New landscaping usually needs to be watered more often with fewer minutes on the clock than mature landscaping. Mature landscaping is watered less often, but has more minutes on the clock for each station to provide the larger plants the water they need to remain healthy.

Q. *Does the City of Palmdale provide evapotranspiration (ET) information to update the irrigation clocks? Does the City charge for this service?*

A. **Yes.** The City broadcasts ET data from our weather stations on a daily basis, and we **do not** charge our residents for this information. The information is available at www.irrisoft.net/buy/palmdale.htm. At the present time only Irrisoft controllers and Rain Bird ET Manager units utilize this information.

Q. *What is xeriscape?*

A. This word is loosely used to describe landscapes that require almost zero supplemental irrigation water for the plants to survive. This is not what the City of Palmdale is requiring; and nowhere in the Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance or Engineering Standards is this term utilized. The ordinance is requiring that plant material with similar water requirements be grouped together and efficiently watered with an irrigation system that has been designed to efficiently provide only the water that is necessary and prevent water waste.

Q. *Is there an example of Water Efficient Landscape?*

A. There is a power point presentation available on the City Website at the following URL. Go to Page three of the standards and the link is available there.
http://www.cityofpalmdale.org/departments/publicworks/engineering/Standards/VI_landscaping.html