

## Memorandum

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**To:** DISTRICT LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
DEPUTY DISTRICT DIRECTORS - DESIGN

**Date:** October 23, 2013

**File:**

**From:** KEITH ROBINSON  
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Division of Design



**Subject:** SWMP IMPLEMENTATION AND MWELO COMPLIANCE

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is scheduled to submit its Stormwater Management Plan (SWMP) to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) by July 2014 to comply with the recently approved NPDES Stormwater Permit (Permit). The Division of Environmental Analysis (DEA) will soon issue a memo that provides interim guidance to comply with the Permit until the SWRCB approves the Caltrans SWMP. A condition of the Permit includes the requirement for "landscapes" designed by Caltrans to comply with the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (MWELO).

In advance of the DEA issue Memo Districts should begin scoping and designing projects that appropriately address MWELO requirements for landscaping projects that are greater than 2,500 square feet. Exempted projects include mitigation planting and erosion control projects with temporary irrigation.

The Landscape Architecture Program (LAP) has determined that MWELO compliance is achieved by ensuring that planting and irrigation designs adhere to the parameters of Maximum Applied Water Allowance (MAWA) and Estimated Total Water Usage (ETWU). Districts only need to document in project files that the design meets the MAWA and ETWU water efficiency standards to be compliant. This approach is for the sole purpose to meet the Permit requirement. Additional local requirements to comply with MWELO may necessitate the Districts to formally submit a documentation package to the appropriate Local Agency, and could vary statewide.

The following FAQ will be included in the Implementation Memo that DEA plans to issue to provide clarification for MWELO compliance and SWMP implementation:

When (and how) will Caltrans be required implement the California Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance (Section E.2.d.1.g of the Caltrans Permit)?

Similar to the Post Construction Treatment requirements, Caltrans is required to follow and implement this requirement on all projects that did not have an approved PID by July 1, 2013.

To comply with the California MWELO, staff will calculate the MAWA and ETWU as defined by MWELO for new or rehabilitated planting projects with permanent irrigation (greater than 2,500 square feet). Exceptions to this are mitigation planting and erosion control projects with temporary irrigation systems and rehabilitation projects where less than 50% of the planting area,

which is defined by its control valve, is being removed or replaced. The sum of ETWU shall not exceed MAWA and these calculations shall be documented and placed in the project file. Where the Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance conflicts with a local water conservation ordinance, Caltrans will comply with the local ordinance.

In addition, the LAP is developing a training webinar that will provide technical assistance for implementing requirements of MWELo. More information will follow on the details of this webinar.

If you have any questions regarding MWELo compliance, please contact Jack Broadent, Supervising Landscape Architect at (916) 653-3170 or go to:  
<http://www.water.ca.gov/wateruse/efficiency/landscapeordinance/>.