



Enforcement News

San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board

SAN DIEGO WATER BOARD CRACKS DOWN ON OVER WATERING THAT LEADS TO POLLUTION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 18, 2015

Contact: Chiara Clemente
Phone: (619) 521-3371

SAN DIEGO -- The San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (San Diego Water Board) is cracking down on water wasters throughout its region to stem pollution that is generated by overwatering.

With the state in a fourth year of extreme drought conditions, the San Diego Water Board recently initiated compliance audits to determine which cities are taking effective measures to eliminate over-irrigation – a requirement of storm water regulations adopted more than five years ago. The statewide emergency water conservation regulation adopted in [July 2014](#) also prohibits runoff, which is generally the result of over-watering. The regional effort enhances compliance with both prohibitions.

The regional compliance effort ensures that water quality isn't degraded by runoff containing bacteria and fertilizers that are transported in local streams and eventually to the ocean. The results of these ongoing audits will be reported to the San Diego Regional Board at a future meeting.

"This isn't just about water conservation, it's about runoff that affects public health and impacts ecosystems," said Chiara Clemente, San Diego Water Board's Enforcement Coordinator. "Landscape over-irrigation is a serious threat to water quality. It runs through the gutters and storm drains to the nearest creeks, lagoons, and beaches with fecal pathogens from pet waste that make people sick, excess nutrients from fertilizers that cause nuisance algae blooms, and lawn and garden pesticides that kill fish and shellfish."

The threats to regional water quality led the San Diego Water Board in 2009 to approve a prohibition on over-irrigation through its municipal storm water permit. As a result, San Diego, Orange and Riverside County municipalities were required to adopt ordinances prohibiting irrigation discharges to their storm drains, and to ensure compliance with the ordinances.

While the San Diego Water Board's over-irrigation discharge prohibition preceded Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.'s January 2014 emergency drought proclamation, the prohibition compliments the State's new emergency conservation regulation. Conserving water prevents water pollution from occurring in the first place.

"The prohibition on irrigation runoff is one of the most important regulations we've adopted in the last decade," said the San Diego Water Board's Program Manager Jeremy Haas. "By cracking down on water waste and reducing unnecessary water consumption, the region hopes to become less reliant on imported water to meet its water demands."

The San Diego Water Board is now reviewing municipal ordinances and the local enforcement response to over-irrigation complaints. The staff will focus on areas with known water quality impairments and excessive dry-weather urban runoff. Cities that do not do their part could face penalties of up to \$10,000 a day by the San Diego Water Board for violating the over-irrigation prohibitions in the municipal storm water permit.

The San Diego Water Board's mission is to preserve, enhance and restore California's water resources and ensure their proper allocation and efficient use for the benefit of present and future generations. For more information on the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board, you can visit their [website](#).

California has been dealing with the effects of an unprecedented drought. To learn about all the actions the state has taken to manage our water system and cope with the impacts of the drought, visit Drought.CA.Gov.

Every Californian should take steps to conserve water. Find out how at SaveOurWater.com.

###