

WSWC-8: METRO WATER DISTRICT – WATER EFFICIENCY CODE REQUIREMENTS

Responsible Party: Local Government

Intent: To increase indoor and outdoor water efficiency through new requirements adopted as local plumbing code amendments.

Action Item: Each local government shall adopt by January 1, 2024 and thereafter maintain the Metro Water District – Water Efficiency Code Requirements as a local amendment to the Georgia State Minimum Standard Plumbing Code. No modifications may be made to the water efficiency requirements or the effective date.

Description and Implementation: Georgia established itself as a national leader when the state passed the Water Stewardship Act of 2010, which directed the Georgia Department of Community Affairs to set more efficient state-wide minimums for indoor water efficiency. In the past 11 years, new water efficient technologies and standards have been developed, and more efficient technologies have become widely available at comparable prices in the marketplace that increase indoor and outdoor water efficiency.

The indoor fixture efficiency requirements in the Metro Water District – Water Efficiency Code Requirements are based on detailed market research on cost, availability, performance, and customer satisfaction performed by District staff. Other requirements are based on cost-benefit analyses performed during the plan update process. The latest WaterSense standards are included as part of the requirements, and while the EnergyStar program is primarily focused on energy use, it is included in the requirements because it also addresses water use in appliances connected to water sources. The requirements are also consistent with other nation-leading mandatory codes adopted by other states and local governments and other green codes and standards like International Association of Plumbing & Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) 2020 Water Efficiency and Sanitation Standard for the Built Environment, and the International Code Council 700-2020 National Green Building Standard.

Outdoor landscape irrigation often results in excessive water use from overspray, an uneven application of water, or high pressure in the line that can cause leaks. Outdoor water efficiency for landscape irrigation systems can be improved by maintaining optimum pressure with regulators, rain-sensor shutoffs, WaterSense irrigation controllers (non-single-family only), and monitoring the system for high-flow conditions (non-single-family only). There are also design practices that avoid water waste from landscape irrigation systems. These technologies and practices are included as requirements for new landscape irrigation systems as part of the Metro Water District – Water Efficiency Code Requirements. These requirements do not apply to landscape irrigation systems (a) used for agricultural operations as defined in O.C.G.A. § 1-3-3, (b) used for golf courses, and (c) dependent upon a nonpublic water source.

To reduce excessive outdoor water use, the Metro Atlanta Plumbing Code Efficiency requirements also prohibit irrigation with reclaimed water sourced from any new private reclaimed wastewater treatment system except for those irrigating golf courses and agriculture operations.

Local governments must follow the procedural requirements provided in O.C.G.A. § 8-2-25(c) for establishing local requirements that are more stringent than the state minimum standard code.

Need Assistance? Contact the District at TechnicalAssistance@northgeorgiawater.com or visit our website at www.northgeorgiawater.org/technicalassistance.

Resources:

- Metro Water District – Water Efficiency Code Requirements – Local Amendment to Plumbing Code, Model Findings Resolution, and Model Adoption Resolution.