



January 30, 2024

Water Efficiency Standards

1. Purpose

The purpose of these Water Efficiency Standards is to conserve the public's water resources by establishing water conservation standards for outdoor landscaping and indoor plumbing fixtures.

2. Applicability

A. The following standards shall at a minimum be required for all **new** developer/contractor installed commercial, institutional, and industrial construction, as applicable and for the front and side yards of all new residential construction. These standards shall apply to existing ordinances related to city required landscaping.

i. If the backyard is required to be landscaped for certificate of occupancy, the standards shall apply to the backyard as well.

B. These outdoor standards are not intended to conflict with other landscaping requirements as defined by Utah law, including stormwater retention requirements and low-impact development guidelines. Notwithstanding these outdoor standards, whenever any requirement may conflict with Utah law, such conflicting requirements shall not apply.

3. Outdoor Landscaping Standards

All new landscaping for public agency projects, private development projects, developer-installed landscaping in multi-family and single-family residential projects within the front and side yards shall comply with the landscaping standards below:

Definitions

- A. Activity Zones: Portions of the landscape designed for recreation or function, such as storage areas, fire pits, vegetable gardens, and playgrounds.
- B. Active Recreation Areas: Areas of the landscape dedicated to active play where lawn may be used as the playing surface (ex. sports fields).
- C. Central Open Shape: An unobstructed area that functions as the focal point of a landscape and is designed in a geometric shape.
- D. Gathering Areas: Portions of the landscape dedicated to congregating, such as patios, gazebos, decks, and other seating areas.
- E. Hardscape: Durable landscape materials, such as concrete, wood, pavers, stone, or compacted inorganic mulch.
- F. Lawn: Ground that is covered with grass or turf that is regularly mowed.



- G. Mulch: Any material such as rock, bark, compost, wood chips or other materials left loose and applied to the soil.
- H. Park Strip: A typically narrow landscaped area located between the back-of-curb and sidewalk.
- I. Paths: Designed routes between landscape areas and features.
- J. Planting Bed: Areas of the landscape that consist of plants, such as trees, ornamental grasses, shrubs, perennials, and other regionally appropriate plants.
- K. Total Landscaped Area: Improved areas of the property that incorporate all the completed features of the landscape. The landscape area does not include footprints of buildings or structures, sidewalks, driveways, and other non-irrigated areas intentionally left undeveloped.

4. **Landscaping Requirements**

- A. Lawn shall not be less than 8 feet wide at its narrowest point.
- B. Lawn shall not be installed in park strips, paths, or on slopes greater than 25% or 4:1 grade.
- C. Lawn shall not exceed 35% of the total landscaped area in the front and side yards of new residential construction.
 - i. Small residential lots, which have no back yards, which the total landscaped area is less than 250 square feet, and which the front yard dimensions cannot accommodate the minimum 8 feet wide lawn area requirement, are exempt from the 8 feet minimum width lawn area requirement and maximum of 35% lawn requirement.
- D. In commercial, industrial, institutional, and multi-family development common area landscapes, lawn areas shall not exceed 20% of the total landscaped area, outside of active recreation areas.

5. **Landscaping Recommendations**

- A. All irrigation shall be appropriate for the designated plant material to achieve the highest water efficiency. Drip irrigation shall be used except in lawn areas. Drip irrigation systems shall be equipped with a pressure regulator, filter, flush-end assembly, and any other appropriate components.
- B. Each irrigation valve shall irrigate landscaping with similar site, slope and soil conditions, and plant materials with similar watering needs. Lawn and planting beds shall be irrigated on separate irrigation valves. In addition, drip emitters and sprinklers shall be placed on separate irrigation valves.
- C. Landscaped areas shall be provided with a WaterSense labeled smart irrigation controller which automatically adjusts the frequency and/or duration of irrigation events in response



to changing weather conditions. All controllers shall be equipped with automatic rain delay or rain shut-off capabilities.

- D. At least 3-4 inches of mulch, permeable to air and water, shall be used in planting beds to control weeds and improve the appearance of the landscaping.
- E. At maturity, landscapes are recommended to have enough plant material (perennials and shrubs) to create at least 50% living plant cover at maturity at the ground plane, not including tree canopies.

6. Landscaping Design Considerations

- A. If size permits, the landscaped areas of the front yard and back yard shall include a designed central open shape created by using lawn, hardscape, groundcover, or gravel.
- B. Gathering areas shall be constructed of hardscape and placed outside of the central open shape. In a landscape without lawn, gathering areas may function as the central open shape.
- C. Activity zones shall be located outside of the central open shape and shall be surfaced with materials other than lawn.
- D. Paths shall be made with materials that do not include lawn, such as hardscape, mulch, or other ground surface material.

7. Additional Recommendations

- A. It is recommended and encouraged that all new and future construction and future additions, remodels, or refurbishments install plumbing fixtures that have the WaterSense label, including lavatory faucets, shower heads, sink faucets, water closets (tank and flushometer-valve toilets), and urinals, to the extent Utah law allows municipalities or local districts to require these fixtures.