

Metro Water District Water Efficiency Code Requirements FAQs

BACKGROUND

Why are the Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District's Water Efficiency Code requirements being implemented?

The unique geography of the metro Atlanta region requires that our communities address the long-term availability, reliability, and resiliency of water supplies through regional planning strategies. The Metropolitan North Georgia Water Planning District (Metro Water District or the District) was created by the Georgia Legislature in 2001 to preserve and protect water resources in the 15-county metropolitan Atlanta area.

The District's required water-efficient plumbing fixtures, equipment, and irrigation system components are one of many key water conservation strategies in the [Water Resources Management Plan](#) to help protect the region's limited water supplies.

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. With over 10 years since the Act was passed, 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. Many of these technologies have already been naturally installed by the public simply due to their on-shelf availability.

Are these requirements different from the pre-existing 2010 Georgia Water Stewardship Act requirements?

The water efficiency code requirements in the 2022 Water Resources Management Plan build on the 2010 Water Stewardship Act to recognize and integrate new water efficient technologies and standards that have been developed since the Act was passed. These include greater efficiencies for lavatory and kitchen faucets, showerheads, clothes washers, and irrigation system components.

How will the new codes result in water savings?

The "Water Efficiency Code Requirements" will help save water by ensuring that new homes and apartments, and existing home and building renovations install leading available water efficient fixtures and components. These changes will use less water and sustain the supplies we have available for our growing region.

When will the new codes be adopted and required?

Local governments are responsible for adopting and implementing the Water Resources Management Plan including the water efficiency code requirements. Effective January 1, 2024, local officials will maintain the Metro Water District – Water Efficiency Code Requirements as a local amendment to the Georgia State Minimum Standard Plumbing Code.

How is compliance with this requirement confirmed?

Communities within the Metro Water District are audited by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) to ensure compliance with the requirements of the [Water Resources Management Plan](#) adopted by the Metro Water District's Governing Board. Local adoption of the Metro Water District – Water Efficiency Code Requirements ensures communities will be eligible for water supply and wastewater permit expansions from Georgia EPD and financial assistance from the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority.

LOCAL CODE AMENDMENT ADOPTION

What are the requirements for adopting local code amendments that differ from the International Plumbing Code with Georgia Amendments?

Procedures for adopting amendments to the state minimum standard code are outlined in O.C.G.A. § 8-2-25(c). When adopting the Metro Water District – Water Efficiency Code Requirements, local governments should first review the [required redlines](#) (with no modifications) to their local plumbing code along with the Model Findings Resolution and Model Adoption Resolution ([See pages 6 and 8](#)). Then, follow the steps as outlined in O.C.G.A. § 8-2-25(c):

1. Adopt the Model Findings Resolution at least 60 days prior to formal adoption of the efficiency codes.
2. Submit the proposed amendment to DCA with the Model Findings Resolution to the following address:
Department of Community Affairs,
ATTN: Director, Office of Construction Codes and Research
60 Executive Park South, NE, Atlanta, GA 30329
3. Following the 60-day DCA review period, adopt the local amendment using the Model Adoption Resolution provided and submit a final copy back to DCA to the following address:
Department of Community Affairs,
ATTN: Director, Office of Construction Codes and Research
60 Executive Park South, NE, Atlanta, GA 30329

What should we do if we receive a response from DCA?

The Metro Water District staff have briefed DCA's Office of Construction Codes and Research and DCA is anticipating the receipt of the Model Findings and Adoption Resolutions from the District's local governments. At this time, the District does not anticipate that DCA will provide formal comments on the proposed water efficiency codes. Should your community receive a formal response from DCA, please reach out to TechnicalAssistance@NorthGeorgiaWater.com so that the District staff are aware and can provide any needed technical assistance.

IMPLEMENTATION

How should local governments share these water efficiency code requirements within their community?

Most local governments publish their local code requirements in a paper form or on their website. Anywhere the local codes are posted, local governments should add a section for “Local Amendments to State Codes” and list the Metro Water District – Water Efficiency Code changes accordingly.

How can building inspectors confirm that new fixtures and technology meet these new efficiency standards?

Flow rate standards for kitchen and lavatory faucets, fixture fittings, and showerheads – Inspectors may use flow gauge measuring bags or similar products to confirm installed fixtures meet the required minimum flow rates. Alternatively, inspectors could request the fixture packaging details to confirm design flow rate of the fixture.

WaterSense standard for lavatory fixtures, fixture fittings, and showerheads – Request the fixture packaging to confirm that the WaterSense logo is present. If the packaging is unavailable and the fixture passes a flow rate test, then there is a strong likelihood that the fixture is recognized in the WaterSense program. Additionally, receipts for single or bulk orders may include the model number which can be searched in the WaterSense database using the EPA WaterSense [search tool](#).

ENERGY STAR clothes washers – Clothes washers installed prior to a final inspection can be verified for compliance with the ENERGY STAR program requirements by looking for the ENERGY STAR logo on the outside of the washer. The ENERGY STAR logo is on all qualified products that meet specific standards for energy efficiency. Additionally, inspectors can search the [ENERGY STAR product finder](#) to confirm the washing machine meets EPA’s energy-efficiency specifications.

Irrigation system components and design – Recognizing the limited resources of local building code enforcement staff, the Metro Water District recommends that irrigation system code inspections only be performed during final inspection for newly constructed residential homes in subdivisions greater than five homes, multi-family residential, and other non-residential construction.

Are there alternative options to field verifying the fixtures and technology meet the new efficiency standards?

In the event local building code enforcement staff has limited resources to verify the new efficiency standards, a signed and notarized affidavit could be used as an acceptable option for legal verification.