

San Francisco Residential and Commercial Water Conservation Ordinances Frequently Asked Questions

How do these ordinances impact the sale of my home or commercial property?

San Francisco residential properties, except tourist hotels and motels, must undergo an official water conservation inspection and complete any necessary plumbing upgrades prior to sale. A list of qualified private inspectors is available from the Department of Building Inspection and a certificate of completion for water conservation retrofits must be filed with the San Francisco Recorder's office before or concurrently with the transfer of the property. Your realtor is a good resource for information on completing the required inspection.

San Francisco commercial properties including tourist hotels and motels are not required to be retrofitted prior to selling the property, but are required to be retrofitted with certain tenant improvements. Regardless tenant improvements, all commercial properties in San Francisco must be fully retrofitted, inspected, and have a certificate of completion filed with the [Department of Building Inspection](#) on or before January 1, 2017.

How do I know if plumbing fixtures meet the new water conservation guidelines?

Many plumbing manufacturers clearly stamp plumbing fixture models with a flow rate. Look closely at each fixture to determine if this information is visible and compare the stamped information to the ordinance requirements. If a property was built before 1994 and has not been updated with new toilets, urinals and showerheads, the plumbing fixtures do not meet San Francisco's new water conservation guidelines.

Your realtor can refer you to an inspector to determine the flow rates of plumbing fixtures. A plumber may be required to repair any leaks detected at the property.

Tip: Toilets manufactured after 1994 meet San Francisco's water conservation guidelines. The manufacturers' date stamp is often found inside the toilet tank.

My property's fixtures do not meet San Francisco's water conservation guidelines. Is financial assistance available to help make the necessary improvements?

San Francisco residential and commercial properties are eligible for SFPUC cash rebates for the replacement of toilets and urinals. Low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators which meet the water conservation guidelines are also provided by the SFPUC free of charge. Visit our rebate program page for [rebate applications](#) and a list of eligible models.

Can residential property owners selling their property transfer responsibility of any necessary improvements to the buyer?

The new ordinance has additional language to clarify that a seller can transfer responsibility for compliance with the water conservation measures to a buyer of a residential property if 1% of the purchase price is held in escrow for the purpose of paying for the water conservation measures within 180 days of the property sale. After a certificate of completion for the required retrofits is filed with the [Department of Building Inspection](#), the remaining balance of the escrow account is released to the seller.

The new ordinance states that commercial properties must be retrofitted with efficient plumbing fixtures when undergoing certain tenant improvements. What types of improvements qualify?

Regardless of tenant improvements, all commercial properties in San Francisco must be fully retrofitted, inspected, and have a certificate of completion filed with the Department of Building Inspection on or before January 1, 2017. During the period between July 1, 2009 and January 1, 2017 the following actions trigger retrofit of non-compliant plumbing fixtures in commercial properties.

- Any tenant improvements costing more than \$150,000 require the retrofit of non-compliant

fixtures that serve the specific area of alteration or improvement.

- Commercial building additions that increase the floor area of the space in the building by more than 10 percent require the retrofit all non-compliant fixtures in the entire building.
- Alterations or improvements to a room containing any non-compliant fixtures require the retrofit of the non-compliant fixtures in that room