

Water ordinance amended slightly

WATER SUPPLY 1990

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SANTA CRUZ — Residents of apartments, condominiums and mobile homes will be allowed more water by the city, which amended its water-emergency ordinance Tuesday.

The amendment adopted by the City Council resulted from repeated complaints from residents of master-metered condos, new "duet homes" and mobile homes that their water allotments were far lower than residents of traditional single-family homes.

According to the rationing plan that went into effect May 1, a three-member family living in a single-family home received 21 units of water (approximately 15,700 gallons) every two-month billing period.

But residents living in a 40-coach mobile home park received only seven units (approximately 5,200) each two-month billing period.

New limits for residents of multi-family developments will be calculated in two ways, either by the limit imposed by the May 1 rationing plan or by 76 percent of the water used in the same billing period of 1987, whichever amount is greater.

Water District Director Bill Kocher said that customers need not apply for the greater amount because it will automatically be fig-

ured into the bill.

Kocher said that the ration limits imposed in May were established by using billing records. The limits were set, he said, by applying a complicated calculation using average consumption for various kinds of customers, such as single-family homes, multi-family developments with two units, three units, etc.

The water was divided in such a way that 55 percent of the accounts in each customer class could meet the ration by conserving no more than they did in 1989, Kocher explained.

Kocher defended the formula as being "extremely equitable," even though, he said, casual examination of the figures appeared to discriminate against multiple-unit accounts. But, he said, records show that multi-family developments use less water per living unit than single-family homes.

Kocher said that most people living in master-metered developments don't have any idea how much water they use because few individual units are metered. Many residents, Kocher said, incorrectly assumed that they would have great difficulty in meeting the allocation.

"The numbers say that 55 percent to 70 percent of the master-metered accounts will not experience difficulty in meeting the allocation," Kocher said.