



Special Districts: Compensation for Directors and Trustees

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The California Special Districts Association: Who we are

The California Special Districts Association (CSDA) is a not-for-profit association that was formed in 1969 to ensure the continued existence of local, independent special districts. Special districts are a form of local government created by a local community to meet a specific need. When residents or landowners want new services or higher levels of existing services, they can form a district to pay for and administer them.

For nearly 40 years, CSDA has been offering its members cost-efficient programs and representation at the State Capitol and has a membership of over 1,000 organizations throughout California. We are the only statewide association representing all types of independent special districts including irrigation, water, park and recreation, cemetery, fire, police protection, library, utility, harbor, healthcare, mosquito abatement and vector control and community services districts, among many others.

CSDA provides education and training, insurance programs, legal advice, industry-wide litigation and public relations support, legislative advocacy, capital improvement and equipment financing, collateral design services, and, most importantly, current information that is crucial to a special districts' management and operational effectiveness. CSDA also works very hard to keep its members informed and up-to-date on current legislative issues and provides an opportunity to have a meaningful representation in the State Capitol.

Special Districts: Compensation for Directors and Trustees

CSDA's *Special Districts: Compensation for Directors and Trustees* is a reference guide to the government codes and laws that govern the compensation of these officials to serve on special districts' boards. It is vital to understand the compensation methods and the procedures to adjust it to make sure that the public funds are administered properly and the public trust is held. This document, created by the CSDA Legislative Department, is meant to serve as a resource for board members and staff to quickly access where in the California codes compensation for the board of directors and trustees are directly identified, as well as procedures to adjust compensation.

The entries in *Special Districts: Compensation for Directors and Trustees* are excerpts from the various California codes that apply to that particular special district. Each entry contains a brief description of the type of special district, brief overview of the law, and the section number of the code where it is located.

Much of state law specifies that compensation, adjustments for compensation, or compensation for other necessary expenses incurred must be adopted by resolution by the board of directors. CSDA recommends, regardless of whether state law specifies, that all forms of compensation authorized by state law be adopted by resolution by the majority of the members of the board.

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The items in this Guide are designed to provide general direction in various areas and are not meant to be legal advice. It is always recommended that an attorney be consulted with any specific questions.

SPECIAL DISTRICT	DESCRIPTION	COMPENSATION	CODE SECTION	ADJUSTING COMPENSATION
Air Quality Management Districts/Air Pollution Control Districts		(See CSDA's supplemental reference for compensation for directors and trustees for Air Pollution Control Districts.)		
Airport Districts	Assists in the development of airports, spaceports, and air navigation facilities.	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to four meetings in one month, and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Public Utilities Code Section 22407</i>	
California Water Districts	Constructs, manages, and repairs works for efficient production, storage, and distribution of water for a variety of purposes.	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to six days in one month, and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Water Code Section 34741</i>	May adjust compensation as authorized by <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
California Water Storage Districts	Delivers water and supplies energy to different users, and provides banking and storage units for groundwater.	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to six days in one month, ten cents for each mile traveled from residence to office, and other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Water Code Section 40355</i>	May adjust compensation as authorized by <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
Cemetery Districts (See "Public Cemetery Districts")				
Citrus Pest Districts	Controls and eradicates citrus pests.	Not entitled to any compensation, but may receive necessary expenses incurred for duties.	<i>Food and Agricultural Code Section 8508</i>	

SPECIAL DISTRICT	DESCRIPTION	COMPENSATION	CODE SECTION	ADJUSTING COMPENSATION
Community Services Districts	Provides more than the various services that other specific districts provide.	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to six days in one month, and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Government Code Section 61047</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
Cotton Pests Abatement Districts	Controls and prevents introduction of pests, and oversees cotton plants in areas that are at risk of pests.	Compensated for all necessary expenses incurred for the performance of duties.	<i>Food and Agriculture Code Section 6063</i>	
County Sanitation Districts	Provides wastewater collection services to ensure and protect public health and the environment.	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to six days in one month, and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Health and Safety Code Section 4733</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
County Water Districts	Develops regulations for the distribution and consumption of water and stores water for future needs.	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to six days in one month, and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Water Code Section 30507</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
County Drainage Districts	This district was established by six acts, the first one in 1885. They can transfer their duties to flood control districts.	Up to \$10 for each day of attending meetings, limited to three meetings in one month, and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Water Code Section 56031</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
Fire Protection Districts	Provides fire protection and other emergency services.	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to four meetings in one month.	<i>Health and Safety Code Section 13857</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
Geological Hazard Abatement Districts	Prevents, controls, and abates geological areas in the district.	Nothing referenced in codes.	<i>Public Resources Code Section 26500</i>	

SPECIAL DISTRICT	DESCRIPTION	COMPENSATION	CODE SECTION	ADJUSTING COMPENSATION
Harbor Districts	Manages any bay, harbor, inlet, river, channel, etc in which tides are affected by the Pacific Ocean.	Serve without compensation till district receives a gross income of \$20,000. Up to \$600 per month, and all other necessary expenses.	<i>Harbors & Navigation Code Section 6060</i>	
Healthcare/ Hospital Districts	Assists in the efficient operation of one or more healthcare facilities.	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to five meetings in one month, and all necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Health and Safety Code Section 32103</i>	
Irrigation Districts	Operates facilities for power generation, and sells electrical power.	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to six days in one month. For districts that produce/distribute electrical power—not to exceed \$100 per day, \$600 per month, \$15,000 a year. All other expenses incurred.	<i>Water Code Section 21166</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
Levee Districts	Protects the district's land from overflow by constructing, maintaining, and repairing the necessary infrastructure.	Compensated for services necessarily required and performed, as determined by the board and all necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Water Code Section 70078</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
Library Districts	Equips and maintains a public library in order to exhibit knowledge in a variety of areas.	Nothing referenced in codes.	<i>Education Code Section 19400</i>	

SPECIAL DISTRICT	DESCRIPTION	COMPENSATION	CODE SECTION	ADJUSTING COMPENSATION
Library and Museums in Unincorporated Towns and Villages Districts	Generally maintains and services libraries and museums in unincorporated towns and villages.	Nothing referenced in codes.	<i>Education Code Section 19600</i>	
Memorial Districts	Maintains memorial halls, assembly halls, and other pertinent buildings/facilities for use by people and organizations.	Serve without compensation but are entitled to necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Military and Veterans Code Section 1197</i>	
Mosquito Abatement and Vector Control Districts	Controls, maintains, and abates mosquitoes and other vectors to protect public health.	Serve without compensation but are entitled to necessary expenses incurred. Board may opt to provide a \$100 allowance in lieu of paying for actual expenses.	<i>Health and Safety Code Section 2030</i>	
Municipal Utility Districts	Provides electricity, solid waste resource recovery, water and/or sewage disposal services within the district.	\$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to six meetings in one month. Boards with seven directors: up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to six days in one month, or up to \$600 per month, and any necessary expenses incurred. Boards that operate an electric distribution system for at least eight years and has a population of 250,000 or more: up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to 10 days in a month and any necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Public Utilities Code Section 11908-11908.2</i>	Specific to boards with seven directors, and specific to boards that operate an electric distribution system for at least eight years and has a population of 250,000 or more, may adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Public Utilities Code Section 11908.1 (b) and Public Utilities Code Section 11908.2</i> .

SPECIAL DISTRICT	DESCRIPTION	COMPENSATION	CODE SECTION	ADJUSTING COMPENSATION
Pest Abatement Districts	Controls and prevents the introduction of pests.	Serve without compensation but are entitled to necessary expenses incurred. Board may opt to provide a \$100 allowance in lieu of paying for actual expenses.	<i>Health and Safety Code Section 2851</i>	
Police Protection Districts	Provides security and protection for the community in that district.	Serve without compensation.	<i>Health and Safety Code Section 20069</i>	
Port Districts	Maintains and secures the ports.	Serve without salary or compensation.	<i>Harbors and Navigations Code Section 6251</i>	
Public Cemetery Districts	Maintains public cemeteries in communities as necessary.	Up to \$100 for each meeting of the board, limited to four meetings in one month, and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Health and Safety Code Section 9031</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
Public Utility Districts	Maintains the infrastructure to provide electricity, natural gas, water, etc. to the community.	Up to \$4,800 a year or \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to 10 days in one month, and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Public Utilities Code Section 16002</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
Reclamation Districts	Reclaims and maintains land that is at risk of flooding for a variety of purposes.	Compensation for services necessarily performed as determined by the board, and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Water Code Section 50605</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
Recreation and Park Districts	Forms recreation and park districts and are responsible for maintaining them.	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, not to exceed \$500 for one month, and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Public Resources Code Section 5784.15</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>

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Regional Park and/or Open Space Districts	Provides recreational opportunities, and easier access to facilities	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, not to exceed \$500 per month <i>or</i> for East Bay Regional Park District up to 10 meetings per month. In addition, compensation for actual necessary traveling and incidental expenses incurred.	<i>Public Resources Code Section 5536-5536.5</i>	
Resort Improvement Districts	Constructs and finances public improvements to meet the needs of specific areas.	Up to \$25 for each day of attending board meetings and 15 cents per mile of traveling to those meetings, limited to two days in one month. In addition, compensation for duties performed other than attending board meetings, up to \$25 per day, limited to five days in one month with an exception for the president, and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Public Resources Code Section 13041</i>	
Resource Conservation Districts	Manages soil erosion, improves land capabilities, conducts surveys and research for the betterment of the area.	Not entitled to any compensation, but may receive necessary expenses incurred for duties which shall be fixed by the board.	<i>Public Resources Code Section 9303</i>	
River Port Districts	Oversees port construction and development.	Serve without salary or compensation but are entitled to necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Harbors and Navigation Code Section 6836</i>	

SPECIAL DISTRICT	DESCRIPTION	COMPENSATION	CODE SECTION	ADJUSTING COMPENSATION
Sanitary Districts	Manages all waste management systems.	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to six meetings in one month and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Health and Safety Code Section 6489</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
Small Craft Harbor Districts	Governs and manages harbors.	Up to \$50 for each day of attending meetings, limited to four meetings in one month and all other expenses incurred.	<i>Harbors and Navigation Code Section 7047</i>	
Water Conservation Districts	Maintains, surveys, and researches water supplies.	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to six days in one month, and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Water Code Section 74208</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>
Water Replenishment Districts	Controls ground water supply for the community.	Up to \$100 for each day of attending meetings, limited to six days in one month, and all other necessary expenses incurred.	<i>Water Code Section 60143</i>	May adjust compensation pursuant to <i>Water Code Section 20200-20207</i>

Water Code Section 20200-20207 is often cross-referenced by special districts' principle acts in regards to adjusting compensation for directors and trustees. This section lays out the process through which districts can adjust compensation for their board of directors and trustees.

20200. As used in this chapter, "water district" means any district or other political subdivision, other than a city or county, a primary function of which is the irrigation, reclamation, or drainage of land or the diversion, storage, management, or distribution of water primarily for domestic, municipal, agricultural, industrial, recreation, fish and wildlife enhancement, flood control, or power production purposes. "Water districts" include, but are not limited to, irrigation districts, county water districts, California water districts, water storage districts, reclamation districts, county waterworks districts, drainage districts, water replenishment districts, levee districts, municipal water districts, water conservation districts, community services districts, water management districts, flood control districts, flood control and floodwater conservation districts, flood control and water conservation districts, water management agencies, water agencies, and public utility districts formed pursuant to Division 7 (commencing with Section 15501) of the Public Utilities Code.

20201. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the governing board of any water district may, by ordinance adopted pursuant to this chapter, provide compensation to members of the governing board, unless any compensation is prohibited by its principal act, in an amount not to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100) per day for each day's attendance at meetings of the board, or for each day's service rendered as a member of the board by request of the board, and may, by ordinance adopted pursuant to this chapter, in accordance with Section 20202, increase the compensation received by members of the governing board above the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) per day.

It is the intent of the Legislature that any future increase in compensation received by members of the governing board of a water district be authorized by an ordinance adopted pursuant to this chapter and not by an act of the Legislature. For purposes of this section, the determination of whether a director's activities on any specific day are compensable shall be made pursuant to Article 2.3 (commencing with Section 53232) of Chapter 2 of Part 1 of Division 2 of Title 5 of the Government Code.

20201.5. Reimbursement for expenses of members of a governing board of a water district is subject to Sections 53232.2 and 53232.3 of the Government Code.

20202. In any ordinance adopted pursuant to this chapter to increase the amount of compensation which may be received by members of the governing board of a water district above the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100) per day, the increase may not exceed an amount equal to 5 percent, for each calendar year following the operative date of the last adjustment, of the compensation which is received when the ordinance is adopted. No ordinance adopted pursuant to this chapter shall authorize compensation for more than a total of 10 days in any calendar month.

20203. Any water district described in Section 20201 is authorized to adopt ordinances pursuant to this chapter. No ordinance shall be adopted pursuant to this chapter except following a public hearing. Notice of the hearing shall be published in a newspaper of general circulation pursuant to Section 6066 of the Government Code.

20204. An ordinance adopted pursuant to this chapter shall become effective 60 days from the date of its final passage. The voters of any water district shall have the right, as provided in this chapter, to petition for referendum on any ordinance adopted pursuant to this chapter.

20205. If a petition protesting against the adoption of the ordinance is presented to the governing board of the water district prior to the effective date of the ordinance, the ordinance shall be suspended and the governing board shall reconsider the ordinance. If the number of votes cast for all candidates for Governor at the last gubernatorial election within the boundaries of the water district exceeds 500,000, the ordinance is subject to referendum upon presentation of a petition bearing signatures of at least 5 percent of the entire vote cast within the boundaries of the water district for all candidates for Governor at the last gubernatorial election. If the number of votes cast for all candidates for Governor at the last gubernatorial election within the boundaries of the water district is less than 500,000, the ordinance is subject to referendum upon presentation of a petition bearing signatures of at least 10 percent of the entire vote cast within the boundaries of the water district for all candidates for Governor at the last gubernatorial election.

20206. If the governing board does not entirely repeal the ordinance against which a petition is filed, the governing board shall submit the ordinance to the voters either at a regular election or a special election called for the purpose. The ordinance shall not become effective unless and until a majority of the votes cast at the election are cast in favor of it. If the ordinance is not approved by the voters, no new ordinance may be adopted by the governing board pursuant to this chapter for at least one year following the date of the election.

20207. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the provisions of the Elections Code applicable to the right of referendum on legislative acts of districts shall govern the procedure on ordinances against which a petition is filed.