



LOCAL DISTRICTS *At Your Service*



Fact Sheet: The “Right” Number of Special Districts

It is not the *number* of special districts that is paramount, but the ability to deliver core local services effectively and responsibly. Below is a summary of the most recent statistics regarding the number of special districts in California.

BY THE NUMBERS:

Voters have created 2,184 independent special districts

The number of special districts in California is often misquoted due to the number of entities included in the State Controller’s annual financial report. While the Controller’s 2008-2009 report lists 4,769 “special districts,” many are actually non-profit corporations or components of other governments, such as cities and counties. Below are groups that are not independent special districts but are included in the Controller’s total number. If the organizations outlined below are subtracted, the Controller’s report identifies 2,184 independent special districts.

What are *not* independent special districts

- 883 county service areas (CSAs)
- 735 joint powers authorities (JPAs)
- 333 dependent maintenance districts
- 191 nonprofit corporations
- 139 dependent highway lighting districts
- 81 permanent road divisions
- 23 parking authorities/corporations
- 200 other dependent districts of cities and counties

Changes in the number of special districts among the most common types¹

	<u>1977-78</u>	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>Change</u>
Fire protection districts	454	372	-82
Cemetery districts	263	252	-9
Community services districts	213	325	+112
County water districts	205	166	-39
California water districts	163	136	-27
Reclamation districts	157	156	-1
Resource conservation districts	139	96	-43
County sanitation districts	124	73	-51
Recreation & park districts	118	108	-10

Additional special districts statistics

- Nearly 85% of special districts are single function
- 73% are non-enterprise special districts
- Special districts provide fire protection for more than 11 million people
- Special districts manage and operate water systems for more than 30 million people and provide waste water management for a similar number
- Special districts operate 46 public hospitals and provide vital health care services to more than 2 million people
- Visit the California Special Districts Association online at www.csda.net for more information.

¹ State of California. Senate Committee on Local Government. “What’s So Special about Special Districts: A Citizen’s Guide to Special Districts in California.” 4th ed. 2010. Print.