

The growing impact of water conservation is another factor for both residential and nonresidential customers; saving water is both a financial and a principled decision.

Industry Regulations Are Wide-Ranging from Restrictive to Opportune

Landscapers face an assortment of rules and regulation affecting many aspects of their businesses. Laws and ordinances related to landscaping address issues from environmental concerns and conservation of resources to specific aspects of landscape designs. Regulation is present at all levels – from homeowners and neighborhood associations through municipal, county, state, and federal governments. Liability for violations lies with both the landscaper and the property owner.

In addition to being subject to regulation, landscapers at all levels can influence policies and legislation at all levels. Landscapers, both individually and collectively, are able to provide expertise from a unique viewpoint. In doing so, they raise the visibility of the profession and public awareness of the industry's scope.

Licensing

First and foremost among regulations are licensing requirements to conduct business. All landscape architects and landscape contractors/construction companies must be licensed by their state (except in Vermont and the District of Columbia).

The national examination for landscape architects is the Landscape Architect Registration Examination (LARE), usually taken after receiving a bachelor's or master's degree in landscape architecture. In the U.S., there are more than XX colleges and universities accredited by the Landscape Architecture Accreditation Board of the American Society of Landscape Architects. These schools offer degrees as Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (BLA), Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture, and/or Master of Landscape Architecture (MLA).

While there is no license for landscape designers, the Association of Professional Landscape Designers has a certification program for its members who have practiced landscape design for at least four years.

In addition to being licensed by their states, landscape contractors may also pursue national certification by the Professional Landcare Network. Among its certification categories are

Simmons Survey Findings on End User Behavior

Portions of the following discussions of certain consumer demographics rely on data compiled by Simmons Market Research Bureau (New York, NY), which surveys a large sample of consumers about their buying habits twice annually. This chapter derives data from the Spring 2008 consumer survey of adults, based on data collected from April 2007 to June 2008.

Simmons has access to complete demographic information about the surveyed consumers, who represent a statistically accurate cross-section of the U.S. adult population. In this way, Simmons can construct detailed demographic profiles of consumers of particular products and services. In addition, Simmons has developed an index system to calibrate the purchase or ownership of a product by a given segment of the population, compared with usage by the population as a whole. If, for example, 10% of all those surveyed report purchase or ownership of a product, the base index of 100 is set to 10%. If 20% of respondents age 18–24 and 5% of those age 55–64 report purchase or ownership, the youngsters would have an index of 200, or twice the norm, and the older cohort an index of 50, or half the norm. Generally speaking, SBI considers an index of 110 or higher to indicate levels significantly above-average.

Simmons surveyed adults regarding whether their home improvements in the past 12 months included a deck or porch/patio and whether they purchased lawn/garden/patio furniture in the past 12 months.

Overall, XX xxxx (XX%) adults bought lawn/porch/patio furniture in the previous year, based on an extrapolation of the spring 2008 Simmons survey results. Fewer than XX xxxx (approximately XX%) adults “bought” or remodeled an outdoor deck, porch, or patio in the previous year. This number has stayed consistent over the past several years.

Table 6-2
U.S. Adults Who “Bought” an Outdoor Deck, Porch or Patio or Lawn/Porch/Patio Furniture in the Past 12 Months, 2006–2008
(percentage of adults)

	Spring 2006 Survey	Spring 2007 Survey	Spring 2008 Survey

Source: Simmons Market Research Bureau, National Consumer Survey, Spring 2008; compiled by SBI. This material used with permission.