

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY WATER COMPANY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT THE DROUGHT

June 2022

WHY AM I BEING ASKED TO CONSERVE WATER?

California is once again in a period of extended severe drought. In response, Governor Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency asking all Californians to reduce their water use by up to 20%. The Governor's action was in response to unprecedented drought conditions that have brought below average snow and rainfall, resulting in record low water levels in the state's water reservoirs and historically low snowpack levels recorded in the Sierra Nevada mountain range.

In response to the governor's call to action, on April 26, 2022 the Board of Directors of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California ("MWD"), Southern California's water wholesaler, declared a Water Shortage Emergency Condition for areas that depend on the State Water Project. MWD's Board voted unanimously to adopt a framework for an Emergency Water Conservation Program which requires local water suppliers, like San Gabriel, to adopt one of two approaches to reduce water use; either (1) limit outdoor watering once per week, or (2) comply with monthly water allocation limits.

In addition to MWD's declaration and in response to the governor's call to action, on May 24, 2022 the State Water Resources Control Board ("SWRCB") adopted an Emergency Regulation to remain in effect for one year unless it is determined that drought conditions no longer persist or unless the regulation is renewed by the SWRCB. This regulation calls on each local water supplier to implement a Shortage Level 2 (ten to twenty percent) from its Water Supply Contingency Plan by June 10, 2022. The Regulation also bans use of potable water to irrigate turf on commercial, industrial, or institutional properties that is not regularly used for human recreational purposes or for civic or community events.

San Gabriel Valley Water Company ("SGVWC") has implemented a Water Shortage Level 2 pursuant to their adopted 2020 Urban Water Management Plans and Water Shortage Contingency Plans and will be limiting outdoor irrigation, unless local ordinances state otherwise. This action is taken to quickly reduce water demand, promote conservation of precious drinking water, and prevent waste.

IS SGVWC GOING TO HAVE A PUBLIC HEARING?

SGVWC has implemented a Water Shortage Level 2 and are encouraging voluntary conservation up to 20%. Should conservation measures become mandatory, SGVWC will file a request with the California Public Utilities Commission (“Commission”) to amend its Schedule No. 14.1, Staged Water Shortage Surcharges and Penalties, and authorize implementation of Staged Water Shortage to implement drought Emergency Surcharges and Penalties in order to comply with any government-mandated water use restrictions. As a part of this process, a public meeting will be held to solicit public comment prior to implementation of any surcharges pursuant to Schedule No. 14.1. Should this action be necessary, SGVWC will notify customers in local newspapers and on SGVWC websites at www.sgvwater.com of the location and time of the public meeting.

SGVWC ACTIVATED A WATER SHORTAGE LEVEL 2. WHAT ARE THE CONSERVATION MEASURES INCLUDED IN LEVEL 2?

SGVWC Water Shortage Level 2 includes the following measures:

- a. Watering or irrigating lawns, landscapes or other vegetated areas with potable water is limited to 2 days per week (SGVWC) between the hours of 6:00 P.M. and 10:00 A.M., unless local ordinances state otherwise.
 - i. Street addresses ending in 0, 2, 4, 6, or 8: Monday and Thursday
 - ii. All other street addresses: Tuesday and Friday
 - iii. Watering duration is limited to no more than 10 minutes of watering per day per station. This restriction does not apply to irrigation systems that exclusively use very low-flow drip irrigation systems.
- b. All Leaks, breaks or other malfunctions in a customer’s plumbing fixtures and/or irrigation system must be repaired within 5 business days of written notification by SGVWC.
- c. Vehicles may only be washed with a hose that has a positive shut-off nozzle or similar device.
- d. Water may not be used to wash off driveways and/or sidewalks, unless for health and safety purposes.
- e. Irrigating landscapes by use of a hand-held bucket or hand-held hose equipped with a positive closing shut-off nozzle or device is permissible.
- f. No watering of outdoor landscapes may occur during and within 48 hours of measurable rainfall.
- g. All leaks, breaks or other malfunctions in a customer’s main plumbing or distribution system must be repaired within 72 hours of notification by SGVWC.

- h. The use of potable water is prohibited for irrigating non-functional turf (NFT) at commercial, industrial and institutional sites. NFT is defined as turf that is solely ornamental and not regularly used for human recreational purposes or for civic or community events. NFT does not include sports fields and turf that is regularly used for human recreational purposes or for civic or community events. The use of potable water is allowed to the extent necessary to ensure the health of trees and other perennial non-turf plantings.

DOES ACTIVATING THE COMPANY’S WATER SHORTAGE LEVEL 2 CONDITION INCLUDE SURCHARGES AND PENALTIES LIKE DURING THE LAST DROUGHT?

No, not at this time. Under Water Shortage Level 2, SGVWC are requesting that customers voluntarily reduce their water usage by 20%. In the event the State, Commission or other governmental agency issues a directive mandating water conservation, the Company will seek the Commission’s approval to implement Staged Water Shortage Surcharges and Penalties.

HOW WILL WATER USE VIOLATIONS BE ENFORCED?

When SGVWC becomes aware of violations of water use restrictions, the Company will first contact the property owner and request that the unauthorized practice be immediately discontinued. SGVWC will document each water waste complaint using the “Outdoor Water Wasting Checklist”. If three (3) documented cases from the same property have been recorded, Violations of prohibited uses may be reported to the SWRCB and/or City or County authorities for additional enforcement action.

It is SGVWC’s intent is to assist customers with water conservation efforts and eliminate water waste to ensure compliance with water use restrictions.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I WITNESS A VIOLATION OF WATER USE RESTRICTIONS?

Please report the violation to your local code enforcement authorities or call SGVWC. Documentation such as photographs will assist us or your local authorities in addressing the unauthorized use of water with the customer.

Another option is SaveWater.CA.Gov is an online tool designed to help save water in communities. This website lets anyone easily report water waste from their phone, tablet or computer and the reports are filed directly with the SWRCB.

HOW CAN MY LIMITED WATER USAGE HELP SOLVE SUCH A LARGE STATEWIDE CRISIS?

The combined efforts of individual customers, businesses and others in the community will have a significant impact.

ARE ONLY RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS LIKE ME BEING ASKED TO CUT WATER USAGE?

No. All Californians are being asked to conserve water including; cities, schools, golf courses, restaurants, hotels, businesses, other commercial and industrial water users, and public water agencies. Commercial, industrial and institutional water users are required to prohibit the use of potable water for the irrigation of NFT. SGVWC’s conservation efforts are tailored to meet the needs of different residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional customers. The company is committed to working with all customers to use water more efficiently and to reduce non-essential uses of water.

I CAN’T CUT MY WATER USAGE. MY CITY / HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION / NEIGHBORS DEMAND THAT I KEEP MY FRONT LAWN GREEN AND MY BUSHES AND TREES ALIVE.

Most people use more water than they realize and more water than is actually needed to maintain landscaping. Simple changes can reduce water usage without a noticeable impact on your quality of life. To prevent the unreasonable use of water, we ask our customers limit outdoor watering to no more than 2 days per week. The use of water is not prohibited to ensure the health of trees and other perennial non-turf plantings. We are in a drought emergency and all Californians are asked to conserve water.

HOW DO I DISTIGUISH NON-FUNCTIONAL TURF (“NFT”) FROM REGULAR TURF?

The SWRCB defines NFT as Turf that is solely ornamental and not regularly used for human recreational purposes, including animal relief areas, or for civic or community events. The ban on irrigating NFT does not include landscape irrigation by residential customers, sports fields and turf that is regularly used for human recreational purposes or for civic or community events. SGVWC is in the process of defining all NFT area’s in it service areas. Customers that have been identified with NFT’s will be notified by the Company.

I LIVE IN AN APARTMENT BUILDING/MOBILE HOME PARK AND AM NOT A DIRECT CUSTOMER OF THE WATER COMPANY. DO THESE RESTRICTIONS AFFECT ME?

Yes. Everyone must help to reduce wasteful water use. Best practices and water use prohibitions apply to everyone. Check for leaks in your bathrooms, such as constantly running toilets and drips at the tub, shower, and sink faucets. Only wash full loads of dishes and clothes; and take shorter showers. Everyone can and should do their part to conserve.

I AM A LANDLORD/MOBILE HOME PARK OWNER/RELATIVE AND PAY THE WATER BILL, BUT I DON’T LIVE AT THE RESIDENCE. HOW CAN I GET RESIDENTS TO USE LESS WATER?

The first step is to speak with them to make sure they understand that California is currently experiencing a severe drought. You can also contact SGVWC to request a water audit at the residence to evaluate onsite water usage and identify opportunities to improve water use efficiency.

I AM ON A LIMITED BUDGET AND CAN'T AFFORD TO PAY TO FIX LEAKS OR TO BUY MORE WATER-EFFICIENT APPLIANCES.

If you are eligible and haven't already signed up for SGVWC's low-income assistance program, known as California Alternative Rates for Water, we can help determine if you qualify. We can also provide free conservation kits and perform a free water audit of your home. Minor fixes and minor changes in habits can save a lot of water and significantly reduce your water bill. Reducing the water you use for outdoor landscaping can generate big savings. Fixing leaky toilets will quickly pay for itself.

ARE THESE RESTRICTIONS PERMANENT?

The state-wide emergency regulations adopted will remain in effect for one year after filing with the Secretary of State (May/June of 2023) unless the SWRCB determines that it is no longer necessary due to the changed conditions. At that time imported water supply conditions will be assessed and, if necessary, additional restrictions may be required.

WHAT SPECIFICALLY CAN I DO TO CONSERVE WATER?

Most water is used outside the home, business or institution for irrigation of landscaping. Leaks inside the home are another major cause of water waste. Contact SGVWC to schedule a water audit and receive other helpful suggestions. The Company provides free conservation kits and may be able to provide information on available rebates from cities and water wholesalers that can help reduce the costs of water-saving appliances and landscaping retrofits.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE CONSERVATION TIPS AND IDEAS?

You can visit www.socalwatersmart.com and www.sgvwater.com for more information.

ARE REBATES AVAILABLE FOR WATER SAVING DEVICES AND REMOVAL OF TURF?

Yes. Please visit www.socalwatersmart.com for more information or call 888-376-3314.

CAN I DRAIN AND REFILL MY IN-GROUND POOL BEFORE THE DROUGHT IS OVER?

Yes. Please be mindful that we are in a drought. It is greatly appreciated if you could refill your pool on an as needed basis. The amount of water needed to refill your pool along with your typical water use will likely place you well above our water use objective to achieve a reduction of 20%.

IF WE ARE IN A DROUGHT THEN WHY LET NEW HOMES BE CONSTRUCTED?

For new home construction, stricter code requirements for water efficiency in fixtures and appliances, mandates for replacing lawns with drought-resistant landscaping are mandated pursuant to current California Building Codes. For existing homes there are incentives for replacing older, less efficient home appliances some of which are including in our current offered conservation programs.

However, it does not mean a ban on home building. Such bans could hurt the economy, make housing too expensive and ignore the progress that has been made in making new homes more water efficient. New homes and developments can't be built unless they meet landscaping requirements that mandate the use of drought-resistant plants and recycled water for irrigation.

Here's how new homes can be built to use less water:

- Low-flow faucets, including those with EPA's [Water Sense](#) label
- Dual-flush toilets that use only 1.28 gallons per flush
- Shower heads with a maximum flow rate of 2 gallons per minute
- Dishwashers, washing machines and water heaters certified by [Energy Star](#)
- Demand-controlled hot water systems to minimize waste while waiting for hot water
- Use of drought-resistant plants
- Computer-controlled, low-volume irrigation systems using drip or microsprays
- Minimization of turf on community grounds
- Artificial turf

WILL THERE BE ANY ENFORCEMENT FOR FIRE PREVENTION, DUST CONTROL OR OTHER RELATED WATER USE?

The company's Water Shortage Contingency Plan is designed to achieve compliance with the governor's water use reductions by focusing customer efforts on reducing non-essential outdoor water usage. Please see the below Shortage Level 2 exemptions included in our Water Shortage Contingency Plan:

Shortage Level 2 restrictions do not apply to the following:

- a. Use of water necessary to address an immediate health and safety need or for essential government services, such as police, fire or other similar emergency.
- b. Use of water necessary to comply with a term or condition in a permit issued by a state or federal agency or to comply with fire mitigation or dust control requirements of a government agency.
- c. Maintenance of vegetation, including existing landscape for soil erosion control if required or approved by a local government agency.
- d. Hand watering to maintain existing/established tree that exist prior to the drought.

IS THERE AN EXEMPTION OR AN APPEAL PROCESS FOR CONTINUED WATERING OF NON-FUNCTIONAL TURF ("NFT") AREA'S?

SGVWC may approve a request for continued irrigation of NFT where the user certifies that the turf is a low water use plant with a plant factor of 0.3 or less, and demonstrates the actual use is less than 40% of the reference evapotranspiration.