



Drought Guidance for Community Water Systems

Persistent drought conditions in New Hampshire have historically resulted in water supply problems for public water systems. Below is information related to mitigating drought conditions and managing impacts.

Drought Conditions

To stay informed on the latest drought conditions and current drought-related information, visit the [NHDES Drought Management Program webpage](#).

Authority to Restrict Outdoor Water Use

Pursuant to [Env-Dw 503](#), public water systems have authority to implement outdoor water use restrictions during water supply emergencies, including drought. The purpose of implementing a restriction is to ensure the community's essential and critical needs continue to be met.

It should also be noted that pursuant to [RSA 41:11-d](#), municipalities have the authority to impose lawn watering restrictions on private well users, including residents and businesses, as well as on customers of public water systems. Such a restriction helps to prevent water shortages for residents relying on their own wells as a result of another household's non-essential use. This type of restriction may also help protect public water system supplies; therefore, coordinating with the local municipality on implementing restrictions may be impactful. To identify the community water systems in your area, complete a query in [OneStop](#), by checking "Public Water System" in the "Areas of Interest" section, choosing the municipality in the "Town" field in the "Location Section," and checking "Community Water System" in the "Public Water System" section.

Outdoor Water Use Model Regulation

[Model Regulation: Public Water System Outdoor Water Use Restriction](#)

When relying on this model regulation, recognize that input from water suppliers in the state and a study on water restrictions show that significant reductions in water use only occur when mandatory restrictions are implemented.

Reporting Restrictions to NHDES for Publicizing

During drought, NHDES will maintain a list of water systems and municipalities implementing outdoor water use restrictions on the [NHDES Drought Management Program webpage](#). To add your municipality to the list, please fill out the Water Restriction Form on the NHDES Drought Management webpage. The public and the media are driven to this webpage during drought; therefore, this is an effective tool for spreading the message about water restrictions. If you have questions, email Stacey Herbold, NHDES Water Conservation Program, at stacey.herbold@des.nh.gov.

NHDES Web Site: www.des.nh.gov

P.O. Box 95, 29 Hazen Drive, Concord, New Hampshire 03302-0095

Telephone: (603) 271-2513 Fax: (603) 271-5171 TDD Access: Relay NH 1-800-735-2964

Communicating with Customers

Use social media, email, local television, road signs and newspapers to provide the public with updates on the drought and the importance of conserving water. Also, the [NHDES Drought Management Program webpage](#) is a great source of information, including [Drought Guidance for the Public](#).

Emergency Actions

In the event of a drought, water conservation measures may not be enough, and a system may need to bulk in water supplies and/or seek approval of an emergency supply well. For further details on the requirements of bulk water and emergency supply wells, see the fact sheet, [WD-DWGB-18-2 Emergency Bulk Water for Public Water Systems](#).

Also, all community water systems are required to have an emergency plan in place. Reviewing the system's emergency plan will help to make sure everyone is on the same page in the event of an emergency.

NHDES Contacts

Large Public Water System Water Shortages: Rick Skarinka richard.skarinka@des.nh.gov (603) 271-2948

Lake Levels: Jim Gallagher james.gallagher@des.nh.gov (603) 271-1961

Small Public Water Systems Water Shortages: Shelley Frost shelley.frost@des.nh.gov (603) 271-2949

Stream Flows: Ted Diers ted.diers@des.nh.gov (603) 271-3289

Water Restrictions, Lawn Watering and Water Restriction Ordinances, Water Efficiency: Stacey Herbold stacey.herbold@des.nh.gov (603) 271-6685

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