

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

FACT SHEET

Why are we in a drought?

Below average rainfall and snowpack combined with historically warm weather conditions has led California into its fourth straight year of drought. Because local water resources are limited, the City of San Diego relies on imported water for approximately 85 percent of our needs.

What does that mean for San Diego?

The drought emergency means that San Diego must meet water usage mandates put in place by the state to conserve water. By the end of February 2016, the city, as a whole, must reduce its water use by 16 percent. Additionally, the City must report water usage to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) on a monthly basis. If San Diego does not reach its 16 percent mandate the SWRCB can fine the City \$10,000 per day.

What about all the water conservation we have already done?

The water conservation goals set by the state are on top of all the work already done to reduce water use in San Diego. Our city would have faced more stringent water conservation targets had we not already begun to save and protect our water supplies.

Does that mean everyone must cut water use by 16 percent at home?

Conserving water is everyone's responsibility. All of us must cut water use in some way so that our city – as a whole – can achieve our mandated goal. Some water users will need to cut more so that those already using minimum amounts of water will not be unfairly burdened by the new requirements. The 16 percent reduction requirement is for the entire city.

Will the City fine me if I don't meet the water use reduction target?

The City is currently fining for violations of water user restrictions, water waste and non-compliance of mandates. Individual customer allocations/targets have not been set. However, if the City, as a whole, is not successful at reaching the state-mandated 16 percent monthly conservation target, the City may consider setting individual customer reduction targets and fines.

What is the easiest way to save water?

The easiest way to save water is to reduce outdoor irrigation and adhere to watering only two times per week, for no more than five minutes. We encourage San Diegans to change landscapes to native vegetation and other drought-tolerant plantings; to take advantage of water-wise gardening workshops provided throughout our community; and to apply for rebates to help make landscape changes.

More information about water-wise gardening, rebates for turf replacement and other outdoor water conservation efforts can be found at WasteNoWater.org and sandiego.gov/stormwater. Additional information on drought-tolerant landscaping and other resources is also available through the San Diego County Water Authority, at watersmartsd.org.

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What measures has the City taken to reduce its water use?

The City is committed to leading by example and complying with all state mandated restrictions. While water efficient measures and policies have been adopted and implemented through the years, we continue to develop and implement additional water-saving activities to address current and future conditions.

As the City's largest water user, the Park & Recreation Department is taking steps to reduce water use. This includes determining what areas of turf will be decommissioned first, where it is feasible to reduce the days-per-week watering schedule, and where drought-tolerant landscaping can be added.

Similarly, the City's Golf Division has enacted drought response steps to reduce water use at City golf courses. The drought saving measures will be in addition to recent upgrades made to the irrigation systems at the Mission Bay and Balboa Park golf courses and the use of drought proof recycled water at Torrey Pines.

Landscaped medians that do not use recycled water will go brown to comply with mandates. Trees in those medians will continue to be irrigated only as necessary to keep them healthy and prevent public safety hazards that can occur from dying trees.

The City also has formed a Citywide Water Use Reduction Team that includes representatives from City departments.

What are the water-use rules?

Everyone must follow water use restrictions at all times. Mandatory measures include:

- Limiting outdoor watering to two days per week, five minutes per day*
- Watering only before 10 a.m. and after 6 p.m.
- Eliminating runoff from irrigation systems
- Repairing all leaks immediately
- Turning off water fountains and other water features unless they use recycled water
- Using hoses with shut-off valves for washing cars (or patronizing commercial car washes that recirculate water)
- For more water-saving tips, visit WasteNoWater.org.

* For systems with multiple stations, water 5 minutes per station. The 5-minutes-per-day time limit does NOT apply to landscape irrigation systems using water-efficient devices, including drip and micro-irrigation systems and stream rotor sprinklers. However, these systems should follow the two-day-per-week schedule.

What about visitors staying in San Diego?

Visitors are welcome in San Diego. The tourism and hospitality industry contributes significantly to our economy. Hotels, restaurants and visitor attractions have water-use restrictions and are required to offer water savings measures to visitors. That means there will be less laundry done in hotels, less water served in restaurants, and less landscaping around visitor attractions.

What is the City doing for our long-term water supply?

The City of San Diego and the San Diego region have been actively developing new water supplies since 1991. The City currently produces reclaimed water at North City and South Bay water reclamation plants to offset potable demand. Pure Water San Diego, a water purification program that will turn recycled water into drinking water and will account for one-third of the city's water supply by 2035. Additionally, ocean desalination, recycled water and groundwater are part of our strategy to diversify our water supply. As a result of the City's long-range planning and increased conservation efforts, San Diego is better positioned to become more water independent.

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Why doesn't the City curtail development?

If the City placed a moratorium on new development tomorrow, the resulting water savings wouldn't come close to the savings we must achieve. Additionally, a moratorium is almost certain to hurt the local economy and create financial problems for the City.

New homes are significantly more water-efficient than existing homes. Under our City building codes, toilets, showerheads and washing machines must meet high standards of water efficiency. By and large, these homes also have smaller yards and less landscaping. As older buildings are replaced with newer ones, our community's water efficiency improves.

The City of San Diego is imposing increasingly stringent requirements encouraging large developments to reduce their water use.

Where can I go to learn more about water use restrictions?

More information about the City's water use restrictions is available in City Park & Recreation facilities, the City's branch libraries, at City Hall downtown, and on the City's website at **WasteNoWater.org**. The City will continue to update this information as we move toward our 16 percent reduction mandate.

Is there enough water for fighting wildfires?

Fighting wildfires and protecting the health and safety of our citizens is a top priority for the City of San Diego. There are no restrictions on the availability of water for that critical mission.

Who should I contact about any specific water-use instructions or restrictions in the City of San Diego?

Visit **WasteNoWater.org** to get the latest information.

Who can I contact if I notice water waste?

Please email **waterwaste@sandiego.gov** or call (619) 533-5271 immediately whenever you see water being wasted. The City's free "Waste No Water" smart phone application allows San Diegans to report sightings of water waste. Go to the app store on your iPhone or Android device and search for "Waste No Water" to download the app. You also may report water waste entering the City's storm drain system by calling the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Hotline at (619) 235-1000 or visiting **sandiego.gov/stormwater**.

Where can I find more information on how to save water or incentive programs?

For tips, rebates, water-use evaluations, and other helpful resources, visit **WasteNoWater.org** or **WaterSmartSD.org**.

How will the drought impact my water bill?

City water customers are encouraged to watch for drought related information that the City will include in water bills. Because water rates are legally required to be cost recoverable, the City is conducting a detailed financial review of the costs associated with providing water to customers, and the revenue required to continue doing so. The City anticipates the review to be concluded in the summer of 2015. If a rate increase is required, the City will provide detailed financial information to each of its customers prior to enacting any rate changes.

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