



Drought Guidance for Public Water Systems

Historically, drought conditions in New Hampshire have resulted in water supply problems for some public water systems. Below, you'll find information related to managing impacts of drought conditions.

Drought Conditions

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

Authority to Restrict Outdoor Water Use

Pursuant to [Env-Dw 503](#), public water systems have the authority to implement outdoor water use restrictions during water supply emergencies, including drought, as well as to shut off service. The purpose of implementing restrictions is to ensure the community's essential and critical needs continue to be met. Guidance can be found at [Implementing Water Use Restrictions at Public Water Systems](#).

It should also be noted that pursuant to [RSA 41:11-d](#), municipalities have the authority to impose lawn watering restrictions on residential well owners during a drought. For more information, see [Drought Guidance for Municipalities](#).

When relying on this model regulation, please note 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 maintains a list of water systems and municipalities implementing outdoor water use restrictions 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. To add your water system to the list, please fill out the [Water Use Restrictions Reporting Form](#). If you have questions, please email waterconservation@des.nh.gov.

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. The [NHDES Drought Management webpage](#) is also a great source of information and resources 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 these requirements, see the [NHDES Public Water System Emergency Planning webpage](#).

All community water systems are required to have an emergency plan in place. Reviewing the system's emergency plan will help ensure everyone is on the same page in the event of an emergency.

Revised: June 2022

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