



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

# Department of Environmental Protection

One Winter Street Boston, MA 02108 • 617-292-5500

Charles D. Baker  
Governor

Karyn E. Polito  
Lieutenant Governor

Kathleen A. Theoharides  
Secretary

Martin Suuberg  
Commissioner

May 13, 2021

Subject: Massachusetts Drought Advisory Status

Dear Registered and Permitted Users Under the Water Management Act:

On May 10, 2021, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Kathleen Theoharides announced that, due to several significant rain events occurring throughout most of Massachusetts during late April and early May, conditions have improved in much of the Commonwealth. Therefore, the Massachusetts Northeast and Southeast Drought Regions were moved to Level 0-Normal Conditions, while the Western, Connecticut River Valley, Central, and Cape Cod Regions remain at Level 1-Mild Drought, unchanged from last month. The Islands Region remains at a Level 0-Normal Conditions, unchanged from last month.

Water Management Act (WMA) permittees, particularly public water suppliers and golf course operators, may have permit conditions requiring that non-essential outdoor water use be restricted in response to the drought declaration.

**If you hold a WMA permit, please review any conditions pertaining to outdoor water use to determine if you are required to implement more stringent restrictions when the Drought Management Task Force declares Level 1 - Mild Drought (formerly identified as Drought Advisory) or higher.**

Other WMA permit holders such as industrial, commercial, or agricultural users, should also review their permits for water use restriction requirements. MassDEP recommends that permittees whose permits do not include outdoor water use restrictions (generally older permits that have not been revised in recent years) and WMA registrants also consider instituting non-essential outdoor water use restrictions following the guidance provided below.

**Public Water Suppliers (PWS) that impose mandatory use restrictions are required to notify the MassDEP, 310 CMR 22.15(8).** MassDEP also requests that you provide notification when you impose voluntary water use restrictions. A MassDEP Notification of Water Use Restriction form can be found at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/watersheds/municipal-water-use-restrictions.html>.

**Golf course operators** are also asked to notify MassDEP when you put your Seasonal Demand Management Plan or other required restrictions in place. The Notification of Water Use Restriction form for golf courses can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/outdoor-water-use-restrictions-for-cities-towns-and-golf-courses>.

This information is available in alternate format. Contact Michelle Waters-Ekanem, Director of Diversity/Civil Rights at 617-292-5751.  
TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370  
MassDEP Website: [www.mass.gov/dep](http://www.mass.gov/dep)

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Please send a completed form to: Jennifer D'Urso, Water Management Program, MassDEP, One Winter Street, Boston, MA, 02108, or email at [jen.durso@mass.gov](mailto:jen.durso@mass.gov). This will assist MassDEP in responding to inquiries regarding use restrictions and answering questions from the public, as well as targeting public outreach and compliance assistance efforts.

**Any PWS having difficulty meeting demands**, drought-related or not, may request a Declaration of Water Supply Emergency ("Emergency Declaration") from MassDEP. The provisions of the Emergency Declaration process are outlined in regulations at 310 CMR 36.40. Suppliers should contact their MassDEP Regional Drinking Water Program Chief (see contact information below), or Duane LeVangie of the WMA Program at (617) 292-5706, to discuss concerns or begin the Emergency Declaration process.

The Emergency Declaration will require the public water suppliers to submit a plan for MassDEP review and approval that includes provisions to remedy the emergency. Such a plan could include measures to purchase water from another supplier, use emergency sources, implement aggressive conservation measures, and provide a mechanism to restrict outside water use for those PWSs that do not currently have the ability to implement such measures.

MassDEP appreciates your efforts to conserve water to minimize the impacts of this drought.

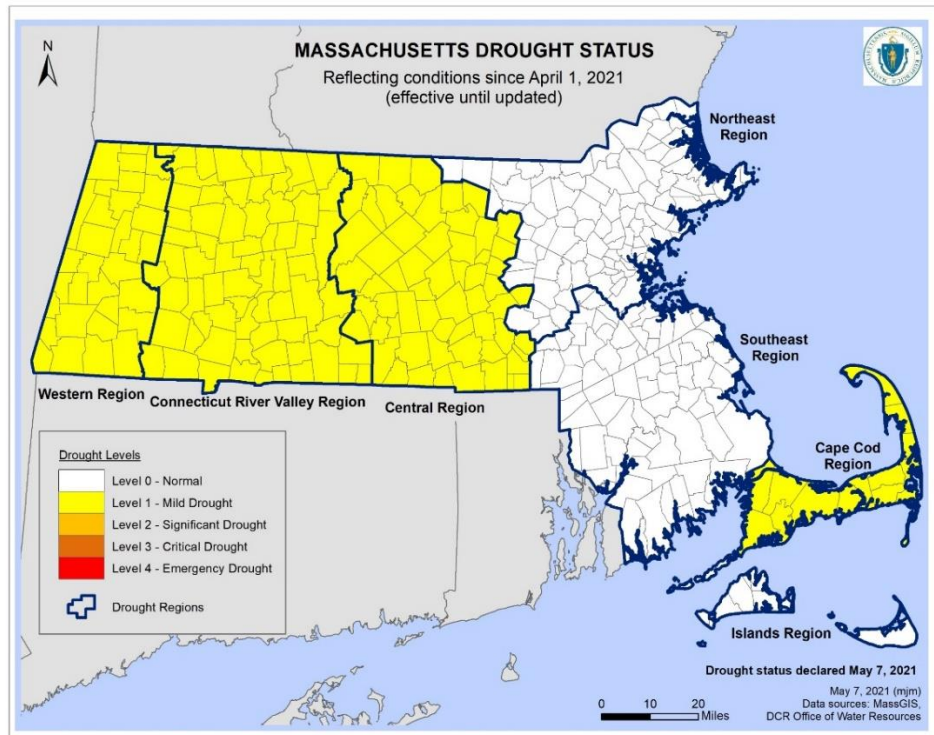
Very truly yours,



Kathleen Baskin  
Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Water Resources

Cc: Duane LeVangie, WMA Program Chief, DEP Boston (617-292-5706)  
Damon Guterman, Drinking Water Chief, DEP NERO (617-574-6811)  
Robert Bostwick, Drinking Water Chief, DEP CERO (508-849-4036)  
Jim McLaughlin, Drinking Water Chief, DEP SERO (508-946-2805)  
Deirdre Doherty, Drinking Water Chief, DEP WERO (413-755-2148)  
Lealdon Langley, Director, BRP-DWM, DEP Boston  
Julia Blatt, Mass Rivers Alliance  
Jennifer Pedersen, MWWA  
Steve Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA

## Summary Guidance for Public Water Suppliers for Instituting Non-Essential Outdoor Water Use Restrictions During Declared Drought



**Level 1 (Mild Drought):** Limit outdoor watering to no more than one day per week, before 9 a.m. and after 5 p.m., except that watering ornamentals and flower gardens with drip irrigation, hand-held hose or watering cans may be permitted.

### At All Drought Levels

- Minimize overall water use
- Limit or prohibit:
  - installation of new sod, seeding, and/or landscaping;
  - watering during or within 48 hours after measurable rainfall;
  - washing of hard surfaces (sidewalks, patios, driveways, siding);
  - personal vehicle or boat washing;
  - operation of non-recirculating fountains;
  - filling of swimming pools.
- Implement drought surcharge or seasonal water rates.
- Establish water-use reduction targets for all water users, identify top water users and conduct targeted outreach to help curb their use.
- Establish a year-round water conservation program that includes public education and communication.
- Provide timely information to local residents and businesses.
- Check emergency inter-connections for water supply.
- Develop a local drought management plan using guidance outlined in the [Massachusetts Drought Management Plan](#).

For further information on water conservation and what residents and communities can do, visit the Massachusetts Drought Management webpage (<https://www.mass.gov/guides/drought-management-in-massachusetts>), and see the Massachusetts Drought Alert below.