



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

Bethany Card
Secretary

Martin Suuberg
Commissioner

July 18, 2022

Subject: Massachusetts Drought Level Status

Dear Registered and Permitted Users Under the Water Management Act:

On July 12, 2022, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Bethany A. Card declared a Level 2-Significant Drought in the Northeast, Southeast, Connecticut River Valley, and Central Regions of the Commonwealth. Additionally, along with the Islands Region which was declared a Level 1-Mild Drought in May, the Western Region has been elevated to Level 1 as well. Currently, the Cape Cod Region will remain in Level 0-Normal conditions.

With 90 percent of Massachusetts experiencing drought conditions, and with little rainfall expected in the immediate forecast, water conservation, particularly curbing nonessential outdoor water use, is important to reduce stress on our local water supply systems and our natural habitats. Since the start of June the drought has been both spreading and intensifying, particularly in the northern half of the Commonwealth. Streamflows have been severely impacted across the Commonwealth, and there are now dry stream beds and ponding visible in many locations.

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.

- **Please note that 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 <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/outdoor-water-use-restrictions-for-cities-towns-and-golf-courses>.
- **Please note that 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>.
 - **Please send a completed form to:** Jennifer D'Urso by email at jen.durso@mass.gov, or by US Mail at Water Management Program, MassDEP, One Winter Street, Boston, MA, 02108. This will assist MassDEP in responding to inquiries regarding use restrictions and answering

This information is available in alternate format. Contact Glynis Bugg, Office of Diversity/Civil Rights at 617-348-4040.

TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370

MassDEP Website: www.mass.gov/dep

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questions from the public, as well as targeting public outreach and compliance assistance efforts.

- **For permittees whose permits do not include outdoor water use restrictions** (generally older permits that have not been revised in recent years) **and WMA registrants**, MassDEP recommends instituting non-essential outdoor water use restrictions following the guidance provided below.

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,

- Kristin Divris, Drinking Water Chief, DEP NERO (617-694-3260)
- 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)

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 enforcement capability to implement such measures.

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

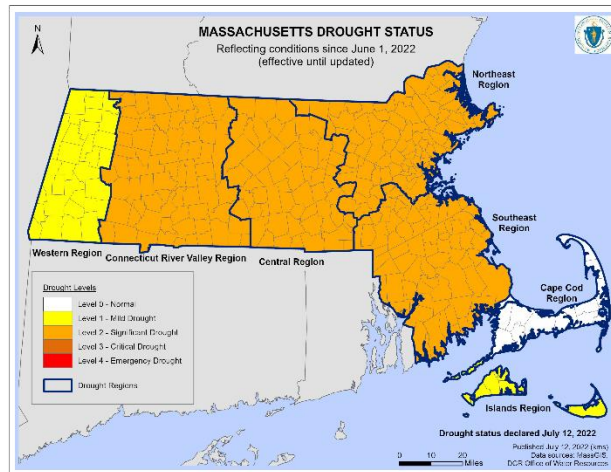
Very truly yours,



Kathleen Baskin
Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Water Resources

Cc: Duane LeVangie, WMA Program Chief, DEP Boston (617-292-5706)
Kristin Divris, Drinking Water Chief, DEP NERO (617-694-3260)
Robert Bostwick, Drinking Water Chief, DEP CERO (508-849-4036)
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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) - Western and Islands Drought Regions

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.

Level 2 (Significant Drought) - Northeast, Southeast, Connecticut River Valley, and Central Regions

Limit outdoor watering to hand-held hoses or watering cans, to be used only after 5 p.m. or before 9 a.m. one day a week.

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>).