



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

September 1, 2022

Subject: Updated Massachusetts Drought Level Status

Dear Registrants and Permittees Under the Water Management Act:

On August 24, 2022, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Bethany A. Card declared that drought conditions have worsened in the Cape Cod, Islands, and Western Drought Regions.

- **Level 3-Critical Drought** - the Cape Cod Drought Region will join the Northeast, Southeast, Central and Connecticut River Valley Drought Regions at Level 3-Critical Drought; and
- **Level 2-Significant Drought** - the Islands and Western Regions are now elevated to Level 2-Significant Drought.

Massachusetts continues to experience drought conditions in all regions of the state, which is not only depleting public water supplies, but is also elevating the risk of wildland fires. The need for water conservation has never been greater. It is critical that everyone limit outdoor water use and practice water conservation to decrease the stress on our water systems and that ensure essential needs, such as drinking water, wildlife habitats and fire suppression, can be met.

Please note that caution is also advised as fire activity has increased across the state as drought conditions have set in, and wildfires in remote areas are now burning deep into the organic soil layers. As a result of fire conditions, the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has implemented a temporary ban, which is in effect until further notice, on all open flame and charcoal fires within state park properties.

If you hold a WMA permit, please review any permit conditions pertaining to outdoor water use to determine the minimum level of restrictions you are required to implement when the Secretary of Environmental Affairs declares Level 1 - Mild Drought (formerly identified as Drought Advisory) or higher.

It is strongly recommended that permittees and WMA registrants institute non-essential outdoor water use restrictions following the guidance provided below.

- **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>.

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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- **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 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:

- 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. To assist in your outreach efforts, we have attached an informational flyer that includes water saving tips. Please feel free to use and share these and to post as appropriate. This flyer provides information to encourage the public to make short-term and long-term changes to limit water use as we all look forward to a break in the weather.

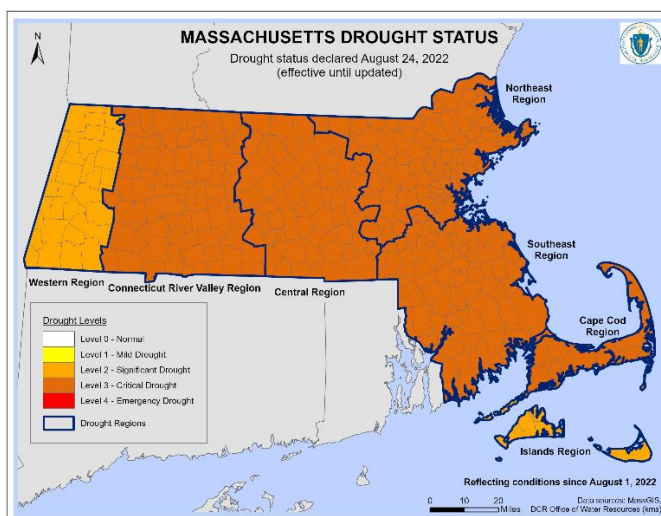
Very truly yours,



Kathleen Baskin
Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Water Resources

Cc: Duane LeVangie, WMA Program Chief, DEP Boston (617-292-5706)
Yvette DePeiza, Drinking Water Program Chief, DEP Boston
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)
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Lealdon Langley, Director, BRP-DWM, DEP Boston
Brian Wick, Cape Cod Cranberry Growers Association
Jennifer Pedersen, MWWA
Steve Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA
Julia Blatt, Mass Rivers Alliance
Don Hearn, Executive Director, Golf Course Superintendents Association of New England

Summary Guidance for Public Water Suppliers



Level 3 (Critical Drought) – Northeast, Southeast, Cape Cod, Central & Connecticut Drought Regions

All nonessential outdoor water uses should be banned.

Level 2 (Significant Drought) - Western and Islands Drought Regions

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

Private Wells

Households and businesses that draw water from private wells should conserve water by reducing indoor and outdoor water usage, and by abiding by the water use restrictions in place in their community.

At All Drought Levels

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.

Provide timely information to local residents and businesses.

Other Emergency Measure to Consider

- **Flushing Programs** - Suppliers may consider delaying routine pipe flushing until later in the fall, if such a delay will not adversely affect water quality. Suppliers with mandatory flushing schedules should contact your DEP Regional Drinking Water Program Chief to discuss concerns or to delay routinely scheduled pipe flushing.
- **Review Emergency Interconnections** – Suppliers whose supplies may be vulnerable if drought conditions continue should now review their available interconnections to other sources or to neighboring water supply systems and evaluate how quickly interconnections can be activated if needed.

- **Emergency Response Plans** - For the last year, the MassDEP Drinking Water Program has been working with PWSs to ensure that all emergency response plans are brought up to date as required by 310 CMR 22.04(13). Suppliers should review their plan and assess preparedness to deal with drought conditions (and other extreme weather conditions). Any changes or updates needed in an ERP should be made as required by 310 CMR 2.04(13). For more information on emergency response planning, visit <https://www.mass.gov/lists/emergency-response-for-public-water-systems>