



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 28, 2022

Subject: Updated Massachusetts Drought Level Status

Dear Registered and Permitted Users Under the Water Management Act:

On July 21, 2022, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Bethany A. Card declared a Level 3-Critical Drought in the Northeast and Central Regions of the state. The Southeast and Connecticut River Valley Regions will remain at a Level 2-Significant Drought, and the Cape Cod Region will join the Islands and Western Regions at Level 1-Mild Drought.

With most of the state currently experiencing an extended heat wave and forecasts predicting little to no meaningful precipitation, water conservation, particularly curbing nonessential outdoor water use, is important to reduce stress on our local water supply systems and our natural habitats. Streamflows have been severely impacted across the Commonwealth, and there are now dry stream beds and ponding visible in many locations. Minimizing water use now will not only allow local water supply systems and natural habitats to rebound more quickly but will also ensure water is available for essential needs, such as drinking water and fire protection.

**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.

- **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 as an attachment to this letter. **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->

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](http://www.mass.gov/dep)

Printed on Recycled Paper

[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](mailto: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.

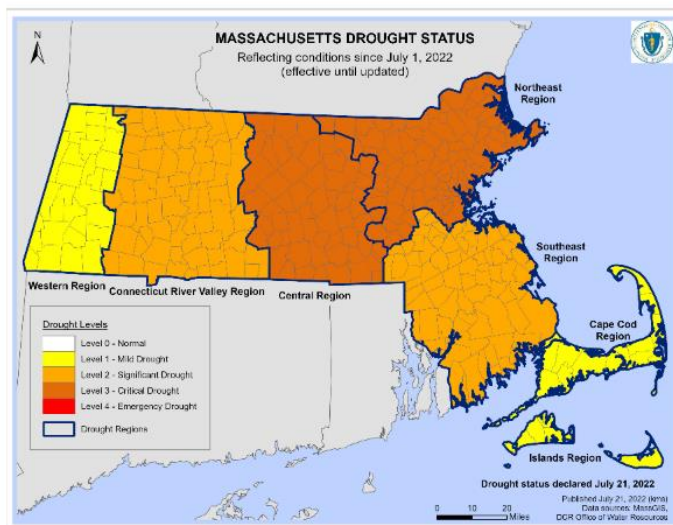
Very truly yours,



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)  
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



## **Level 3 (Critical Drought) – Northeast and Central Regions**

All nonessential outdoor water uses should be banned.

## **Level 2 (Significant Drought) - Southeast and Connecticut River Valley Regions**

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

## **Level 1 (Mild Drought) – Western, Cape 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.

## **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.

## **Emergency Response Plans**

With drought conditions persisting throughout the Commonwealth, now is a good time to review your emergency response plan and assess your preparedness to deal with drought conditions (and other extreme weather conditions). For more information on emergency response planning, visit <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/water-systems-ops.html>.