



# Dealing With Drought



California is currently in one of the most severe droughts in its history, and the Governor's Office and water officials have taken action to increase water conservation efforts throughout the state.

On July 15, 2014, the State Water Resources Control Board approved an emergency regulation to reduce outdoor urban water use in California. All Californians are now under mandatory water use restrictions. The City of Newport Beach (City) is the local enforcer of these restrictions and is required to implement a water shortage contingency plan that reduces outdoor irrigation.

## What This Means To You

A new set of conservation measures joins an older set. The older measures were adopted by the City Council five years ago and are permanent and pertain to all of Newport Beach. The new measures, just recently approved, are temporary - until State water officials say we are safely out of the current drought. These new measures pertain to Newport Beach water customers only.\*

### Permanent Conservation Measures in Effect Since 2009

**The first set of restrictions, in place since 2009, pertain to all Newport Beach residents and prohibit the following:**

- Watering over 15 minutes per station for automated irrigation systems
- Watering outdoor landscapes in a manner that causes excess runoff
- Washing down of hard surfaces including sidewalks and driveways
- Not repairing water leaks or breaks quickly
- Washing a motor vehicle with a hose, unless the hose is fitted with a shut-off nozzle
- Operating a fountain or decorative water feature, unless the water is part of a recirculating system.

A link to the complete list of permanent restrictions is available on the City's website at [www.newportbeachca.gov/water](http://www.newportbeachca.gov/water).

Also in 2009, the City Council adopted a multi-level water shortage contingency plan (NBMC 14.16.050 through 14.16.090) to respond to water supply shortage conditions.

## September 2014 Changes

The new set of conservation measures supplements the existing restrictions. The key difference is that these new measures only apply to City of Newport Beach water customers.\*

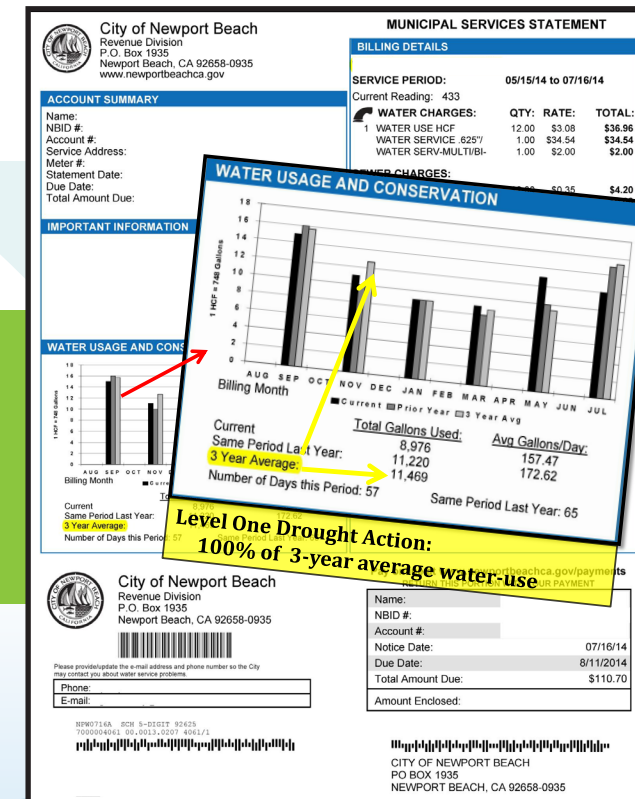
### They include:

- 1) Lawns and landscaping can only be irrigated a maximum of four days per week from April through October and two days per week from November through March.
- 2) Each customer's water use should not exceed 100% of the "base amount." (An explanation of "base amount" is to the right.)
- 3) Water leaks must be repaired within 72 hours.
- 4) Ornamental lakes, ponds or fountains can only be filled once per week.
- 5) Swimming pools/spas can only be filled or re-filled one foot per week.

**\*Note:** If you are not a Newport Beach water customer, meaning, you receive your water from an agency other than the City (such as Mesa Water District or Irvine Ranch Water District), please contact your water supplier for more information about conservation regulations specific to you.

## Water Use at 100% of Base Amount

The "base amount" is a three-year, moving average of your water use during that same billing period. For example, we compare water used in July 2014 with the average of water used in the month of July in 2013, 2012, and 2011. If we don't have three years of data for you, the base amount will be an estimate of the water used for a similar property or customer. Your current water usage, your usage during the same billing period last year, and your three-year average water use is already shown on your Municipal Services Statement. (See example below.)



## Outdoor Irrigation Schedules

The days that you can water lawns and gardens will be different depending on where you live in Newport Beach. Watering days will be displayed on your Municipal Services Statement. You will also receive a postcard in the mail that lists your watering days. You can learn more by:

- Visiting our website at [www.newportbeachca.gov/water](http://www.newportbeachca.gov/water) to view a map or simply type in your address.
- Logging onto your City online bill pay account (for customers that pay electronically) to view your outdoor watering schedule.
- Calling the Newport Beach Conservation Information Line at 949-644-3388.

## How Does this Save Water?

This year has been warmer than the past three years and many customers are watering their lawns and gardens more. In fact, nearly 50% percent of our water customers have increased their water use this year. However, if everyone used the three-year average of the base amount (in effect, a cutback from 2014), we would achieve the required level of conservation.

## What if I've Already Been Conserving Water?

We know that water use can increase or decrease due to factors unrelated to wasteful water use and practices. For example, a previous, aggressive effort by your family to significantly restrict water use in past years should be respected and relieved from further reductions at this time. You can ask us for "relief from compliance" from some of the new restrictions. Forms are available on the City's website at [www.newportbeachca.gov/water](http://www.newportbeachca.gov/water) or you can call us at 949-644-3388.

*San Luis Reservoir*



Photo Credit:  
California Department of Water Resources

## What Are Some Of the Exceptions to the Restrictions?

### Exempted from Level One (the new, temporary) requirements:

- Maintenance of vegetation watered by bucket, hand-held nozzle or drip system
- Irrigation of food crops
- Maintenance of an irrigation system (testing/repair).

### Always exempt:

- Places that use reclaimed water for irrigation
- Water used for public health/safety
- Public pool refilling
- Irrigation of fuel modification areas
- Hospitals and medical facilities
- Businesses whose sole trade is cultivating plants, like nurseries.

## Enforcement

Gaining voluntary compliance is always the City's goal – first through education and assistance, then through warnings. The Level One restrictions are in effect at least through April 1, 2015. At that time, officials may decide to extend the restrictions if drought conditions persist.

Enforcement will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Following a period of community outreach and education, the City will notify a customer (through letters, door hangers, etc.) if a violation has occurred. However, if a violation is particularly egregious or if there is continued non-compliance, we may not have any other options but to levy a fine. We hope this will be rare.

## Please Help Us, Too!

Please help us identify where irrigation at City properties like parks, medians, parkways, and more might result in overwatering and runoff. Call the information line to report a sprinkler break, an improper hosing down of something, or anything that you think deserves our attention. The Water Conservation Information Line number is 949-644-3388 or you can report online at [www.newportbeachca.gov/quest](http://www.newportbeachca.gov/quest).

## Water Audits, Conservation Rebates and Assistance

There are a number of rebates and free programs and workshops available to help customers reduce their outdoor water use. We can also come by and conduct a free water audit of your home to make sure things are working correctly. For more information, please visit [www.watersmartnewport.org](http://www.watersmartnewport.org).

## Water Conservation Information

We've set up an information line to help you get to the right person quickly. You can get help interpreting water bills, determining your watering days and receive conservation advice by calling 949-644-3388.



[www.newportbeachca.gov/water](http://www.newportbeachca.gov/water)  
949-644-3388