

Managing Water Use During a Drought Emergency

During a declared drought emergency, certain specific water uses are prohibited. This fact sheet is intended to clarify water use responsibilities under drought emergency conditions. For a complete listing of nonessential water use bans and their exceptions, consult 4 Pa. Code § 119.4, relating to prohibition of nonessential water uses.

Paved Surfaces

Use of any water for washing paved surfaces such as streets, roads, sidewalks, driveways, garages, patios, parking areas, tennis courts, and decks is prohibited, except under the following conditions:

- Flat, horizontal surfaces may be prewashed in preparation for recoating and sealing.
- Paved surfaces may be washed to ensure sanitary conditions on the premises of raw or processed food or pharmaceutical or vaccine processing, storage, or vending establishments, including restaurants and grocery stores.
- Paved surfaces may be washed to ensure sanitation of waste handling, storage, and disposal facilities.
- Paved surfaces may be washed if necessary to comply with permit conditions or other regulatory requirements.

Gardens, Landscaped Areas, Trees, Shrubs, and Other Outdoor Plants

Fresh water may be used to water outdoor gardens if the garden is used to produce food and fiber or to maintain livestock and poultry.

To ensure effective conservation, other gardens, trees, shrubs, and outdoor plants may be watered between 5 PM and 9 AM. Water can be applied by means of a bucket, can, hand-held hose equipped with an automated shut-off nozzle, or an irrigation system that is designed and operated to restrict the timing or total volume of water and to restrict the application to specific plantings.

Nurseries may use water to maintain stock by a means that ensures effective water conservation.

Fresh water may be used by public gardens of national, state, or regional significance, or by arboretums to preserve specimens by a means that ensures effective water conservation.

Professional landscapers or irrigation contractors may use water during working hours by a means that ensures effective water conservation.

Fresh water may be used to revegetate areas following earthmoving where required by an erosion and sedimentation control plan and in a manner that ensures effective conservation.

Vehicle Washing

Personally owned or leased vehicles may be washed using buckets or a hand-held hose equipped with an automatic shutoff nozzle used for prerinsing and rinsing not to exceed two minutes total spray time.

Personal vehicle washing is limited to properties with odd street addresses on the first and third weekend of the month, and properties with even or no street addresses on the second and fourth weekend of the month.

Auto dealers may use water for cleaning new and used vehicles that are part of their sales inventory in accordance with restrictions detailed in the Chapter 119 regulations.

Commercial car washes may use water at the minimum rate necessary to ensure an effective wash.

Nonprofit service organizations or clubs may wash vehicles for fundraising activities using buckets or a hand-held hose equipped with an automatic shutoff nozzle used for prerinsing and rinsing not to exceed two minutes total spray time.

Swimming Pools

Public swimming pools and residential pools serving 25 or more dwelling units may be filled and topped off if the pools have filtration equipment allowing for combined use and recycling of water over the swimming season.

Swimming pools operated by health care facilities used in relation to patient care and rehabilitation may be filled and topped off.

Other swimming pools may be filled and topped off only if approved by the public water supply system from which the water is withdrawn. If water is obtained from other sources, permission must be obtained from the owner of the source.

Kiddie wading pools may be filled. When emptying these pools, it is recommended that the water be used on gardens and landscaping.

Ornamental Fountains, Artificial Waterfalls, Reflecting Pools, Fish Ponds, and Water Gardens

Use of any water for ornamental purposes is prohibited, except under the following conditions:

- Water may be used to top off ornamental water gardens or fish ponds to the minimum extent necessary to maintain fish and aquatic life.
- Artificial fountains or waterfalls may be operated to perform the primary and necessary aeration function for a pond that supports fish life.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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