



AUGUST 9, 2022

NEW JERSEY ENTERS DROUGHT WATCH

Murphy Administration Urges NJ Residents and Businesses to Conserve Water to Avoid Worsening Water Supply Conditions

New Jersey Commissioner of Environmental Protection Shawn M. LaTourette issued a statewide **drought watch** as of August 9, 2022, and the Murphy Administration is urging residents and businesses to conserve water as persistent dry and hot conditions continue to stress water supplies throughout the state.



The Commissioner’s declaration of a drought watch is the first in the State’s three-stage drought advisory system. The watch is intended to sow public awareness and appreciation of the stress upon water supply sources and encourage voluntary water conservation measures. If conditions do not improve, declaration of a drought warning or a drought emergency with mandatory

water use restrictions may become necessary. Voluntary conservation measures at the watch stage can help to avoid more serious and restrictive drought conditions.

“Stream flow and ground water levels are falling below normal for most of the state and some reservoirs are showing steep rates of decline as hot and dry conditions continue,” Commissioner LaTourette said. “While water conservation is always important, it becomes critical during prolonged dry and hot periods like New Jersey has been experiencing. If residents and businesses do all they can to reduce water demand, together we can ensure ample supplies in the coming weeks and months.”

At this time of year, more than 30 percent of water demand in suburban areas is for outdoor purposes, much of which can be reduced or avoided. The public can make a big difference by reducing

Water Supply Status and Actions

Normal

Routine monitoring of water supply and meteorological indicators. All conditions normal.

Current Status

Watch

Focus placed on voluntary reductions in demand through increased public awareness.

Warning

DEP Commissioner issues order urging public to voluntarily use water sparingly; DEP may issue orders to purveyors to manage supplies in most affected regions.

Emergency

Governor orders mandatory restrictions on certain uses of water, usually phased in as conditions deteriorate.

watering of lawns and landscaping, reducing the washing of vehicles, and cutting back nonessential uses such as hosing off driveways and sidewalks. Residents and businesses can also practice many conservation measures to reduce indoor water use. For more water conservation tips, visit <https://dep.nj.gov/consERVE-water/>

On July 26, the [DEP reminded residents and businesses](#) of the impact hot and dry conditions could have on supplies and asked for the public’s assistance to moderate demand. Water conservation measures are vital tools that will help New Jersey residents and businesses as we continue to confront a changing climate.

As explained in the New Jersey-specific [Scientific Report on Climate Change](#) first released in July 2020, while New Jersey will experience a greater frequency of intense rain events, and decreases in precipitation may occur in the summer months, resulting in greater potential for more frequent and prolonged droughts.

The most up-to-date information about the status of New Jersey’s water supplies can be found at dep.nj.gov/drought. The last drought watch or warning to be declared in New Jersey was in 2016. The last drought emergency with mandatory water use restrictions was declared in 2002. In October 2016, the DEP placed 14 counties in the northern, central, and northern coastal areas of New Jersey under a drought warning due to ongoing precipitation deficits and deteriorating water-supply conditions, particularly storage levels in reservoirs. At the same time, regions along the lower Delaware River were placed under a watch. All regional drought warnings and watches were lifted by August 2017. In March 2002, then-Governor Jim McGreevey declared a drought emergency, which was lifted in January 2003.

The DEP is continuing to closely monitor drought indicators, which include precipitation, stream flows, reservoir levels, ground water levels, and water demand. DEP will continue to inform the public, local governments, and water systems of future actions to mitigate the risk of more severe conditions.

The DEP has prepared a Conserve Water Toolkit at dep.nj.gov/consERVE-water/toolkit which provides infographics, a flyer, a video and social media resources that can be downloaded and used by organizations and government agencies to spread information on drought conditions and water conservation.

10 SIMPLE STEPS TO SAVE WATER THIS SUMMER

 Water flowers and landscaping with water harvested in a rain barrel connected to a downspout. 1	 Avoid recreational toys that require a constant stream of water. 6
 Use 80-90% less water with drip irrigation and micro-sprays compared to sprinklers. 2	 Raise your lawnmower blade to at least 3 inches to promote deeper grass roots which hold water better. 7
 Only water when needed. In NJ most landscapers need only 1 inch of water per week. This often comes from dew and rainfall. 3	 Use water from dehumidifiers and air conditioners to water your plants. 8
 If you have a pool purchase a water saving filter. 4	 Use native plants that need less water. 9
 Cover your pool when not in use to reduce evaporation rates. 5	 Group plants together based on water needs. 10

Summertime, means swimming pools, sprinkler jumping, and barbecues surrounded by manicured landscape. During the summer months, while water supplies are typically declining, water usage is increasing. In fact, water usage from winter to summer increases by approximately 30%. However, we can all do our part to reduce water usage by following these 10 simple tips.


