



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS DROUGHT AND CONSERVATION UNDER STAGE 2 – WATER SHORTAGE WARNING

1. Is the drought over?

No, Southern California and many parts of the State are still in drought conditions, albeit water supply conditions have improved. While reservoirs on the State Water Project have been filling up and the snowpack in the Northern Sierra is at the highest level in 40 years, two months remain in the wet season and California could see a return to dry conditions. Moreover, Lake Powell and Lake Mead, which provide Colorado River System water to seven western states and much of Southern California, remain at historically low levels. At this time, the District is still targeting a 20 percent reduction in water use for 2023 compared to 2020.

2. What does LVMWD's discontinuation of the State of Emergency and de-escalation of the Water Shortage Contingency Plan from State 3 to Stage 2 mean for me?

Customers' water budgets will be restored to "normal" – meaning that a drought factor will no longer be applied to outdoor water budgets and enough water is available to meet most, if not all, outdoor watering needs. Also, the penalty count (the number of times that a customer was assessed penalties since December of 2021), will be reset to zero. In other words, customers will get a fresh start and will only be assessed penalties again if they exceed 200 percent of their water budget (it was 150 percent under Stage 3). Penalties will also max-out at \$5 per unit for every unit of water that exceeds 200 percent of their budget, as opposed to \$10 during Stage 3. The flow restriction device program is also being temporarily suspended; however, current plans are to reinstate the flow restriction program in the coming months. If reinstated, the devices will only be used on accounts that routinely exceed 200 percent of a customer's water budget.

3. Do I need to reduce my water use by 20 percent?

Maybe. The District's overall water-use reduction target for 2023 is 20 percent month-to-month compared to the same months in 2020. It was 35 percent in 2022 under Stage 3. Customers collectively did an outstanding job and, on average, reduced their water use by nearly 40 percent in the latter half of 2022. With the new target, customers are being asked to stay within their water budgets. If a customer was highly efficient in 2020, little to no reduction is needed. However, customers that regularly exceeded their water budgets in 2020 may need to reduce by even more than 20 percent for 2023. **The simple answer is – please stay within your new water budgets – which are provided as "look-ahead" estimates on your bills each month.** To learn more about water budgets, visit <https://www.lvmwd.com/for-customers/water-budgets> and be sure to watch the animated video.

4. Does the 20 percent target in reduced water use apply to recycled water accounts too?

Yes. Recycled water is also in short supply to the extent that it needs to be supplemented with potable water during hotter months of the year. The District's objective is to eliminate the need to augment the recycled water system with potable water and to also free up recycled water to the extent possible for a higher beneficial use – to augment supplies for the future Pure Water Project. To learn about the Pure Water Project, visit www.ourpureh2o.com.

5. Am I still at risk of receiving a flow restriction device?

The flow restriction device program is being temporarily suspended, but current plans are to reinstate it in the coming months. Customers need only worry about the prospect of a flow restriction device if they routinely use more than twice the amount of their monthly water budget.

6. Can I water more than one day per week now?

Customers can still only water (with automatic sprinkler systems) one day per week until such time that the water wholesaler, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, lifts the restriction. This may occur as early as March 16, 2023 and customers will be notified if and when the one-day watering restriction is lifted.

7. What should I be doing in the short and long run with regards to water use?

In the short run, stay within your water budget and use water as efficiently as possible – do not exceed your water budget to avoid paying higher rates and penalties, including the possible use of a flow restriction device. **For the long run, transform your outdoor landscaping to be drought tolerant and more resilient to future water shortages, which are inevitable.** Avoid installing sod or seeding for traditional grass and consider alternatives such as Kurapia or buffalo grass, that require 60% less water. Explore LVMWD's website and look for rebates and incentives that can help pay for water saving devices and landscape transformations. Visit www.lvmwd.com/community-resources/efficient-outdoor-water-use. Also, visit the Sustainability Garden located at District Headquarters at 4232 Las Virgenes Road to get inspirational landscaping ideas.



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REGISTER FOR WATERSMART

Customers are also highly encouraged to register for WaterSmart. This is a software program that allows customers to monitor their water use in near real-time. Customers can customize their account preferences to receive potential leak alerts, which can not only prevent the waste of water but save a lot of money too. To be eligible for leak and accidental continuous use adjustments, customers must be registered for WaterSmart at the time the leak or accidental use occurred. Register at www.lvmwd.com/advancedmeters.

8. How can I continue to be water efficient in stage 2?

Here are a few ways that you can help continue to be conservation minded:

- Stay within your water budget.
- Register for Watersmart and set up communication preferences to monitor for potential leaks or spikes in use.
- Only run the dishes when your dishwasher is full.
- Keep your showers to less than 5 minutes.
- Limit outdoor watering to after 5 pm and before 10 am.
- Replace high water use vegetation, like grass with drought tolerant climate appropriate plants.
(www.lvmwd.com/community-resources/efficient-outdoor-water-use)
 - Plant now (before May 2023 or plan and prepare to plant in Fall 2023).
- Do not water outdoors within 48 hours of measurable rainfall.
- Do not water in ways that allow for excess runoff.
- Claim your discounted Rachio Smart Irrigation Controller and free professional installation – <https://go.rachio.com/lvmwd/>
- Attend free water use efficiency workshops offered by LVMWD – Spring, Summer and Fall 2023.
- Water your landscape more efficiently and save water by converting spray heads to drip irrigation.
- Install a rain barrel or cistern to capture rainfall.
- Pick up free, high quality compost every Saturday, 8am – 1pm at LVMWD’s Rancho Las Virgenes Composting Facility – 3700 Las Virgenes Road.

9. Can someone come out and help me identify ways I can be more water efficient?

Yes. If you’re interested in having a representative come to your property to assist you in finding ways to be more water efficient, you will need to request a Water Use Evaluation. You can also have your irrigated area verified as part of the evaluation. The cost is \$180, but will be waived if you pre-register for WaterSmart or if we determine that the irrigated area we had on file was at least 10 percent less than what we measure as part of the evaluation. Customers are not eligible for a free evaluation or audit if they have already had one within the past 3 years. Contact a representative at 818-251-2100 or e-mail: Customer_Service@lvmwd.com.

10. How long will Stage 2 be in place?

Until such time that water supply conditions further improve (or deteriorate). To stay informed, visit www.lvmwd.com/droughtresponse.

11. My HOA says they will fine me if I don’t replace my dead lawn with new grass – do I have to comply?

It depends. If you made an investment in artificial turf or drought-tolerant and climate appropriate landscaping, California law prohibits HOAs from requiring you to replace it with traditional grass turf. Visit www.waterboards.ca.gov/publications_forms/publications/factsheets/docs/prohibitions_hoas_fs.

12. What is the District doing to acquire more water supplies?

The District has been working closely with its water wholesaler, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), to identify other sources of water that can be utilized to provide additional supplies. Planning efforts are underway to build additional water infrastructure to improve the District’s access to other supplies. The District is also working with its partner agency, the Triunfo Water and Sanitation District, as part of the Las Virgenes-Triunfo Joint Powers Authority to develop a new source of local, drought-resilient water supply with the Pure Water Project Las Virgenes-Triunfo (visit www.ourpureh2o.com). However, these additional water supply sources are several years away and will not help with the current water shortage.