

**Surf City Water Shortage Response Plan
Town of Surf City, North Carolina
May 2023**



The procedures herein are written to reduce potable water demand and supplement existing drinking water supplies whenever existing water supply sources are inadequate to meet current demands for potable water.

I. Authorization

The Surf City Town Manager shall enact the following water shortage response provisions whenever the trigger conditions outlined in Section IV are met. In his absence, the Public Utilities Director will assume this role.

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II. Notification

The following notification methods will be used to inform water system employees and customers of a water shortage declaration:

- employee e-mail announcements
- notices at municipal buildings
- notices in water bills
- Town of Surf City website homepage

Required water shortage response measures will be communicated through *The Pender Post*, PSA announcements on local radio and cable stations, and on the Town of Surf City website. Declaration of emergency water restrictions or water rationing will be communicated to all customers by telephone, text message, email or door hangers if necessary.

III. Levels of Response

Five levels of water shortage response are outlined in the table below. The five levels of water shortage response are: voluntary reductions, mandatory reductions I and II, emergency reductions and water rationing. A detailed description of each response level and corresponding water reduction measures follows below.

Stage	Response	Description
1	Voluntary Reductions	Water users are encouraged to reduce their water use and improve water use efficiency; however, no penalties apply for noncompliance. Water supply conditions indicate a potential for shortage.
2	Mandatory Reductions I	Water users must abide required water use reduction and efficiency measures; penalties apply for noncompliance. Water supply conditions are significantly lower than the seasonal norm and water shortage conditions are expected to persist.
3	Mandatory Reductions II	Same as in Stage 2
4	Emergency Reductions	Water supply conditions are substantially diminished and pose an imminent threat to human health or environmental integrity.
5	Water Rationing	Water supply conditions are substantially diminished and remaining supplies must be allocated to preserve human health and environmental integrity.

Stage 1 - Voluntary Reductions

- All water users will be asked to reduce their normal water use by 5%.
- Customer education and outreach programs will encourage water conservation and efficiency measures including:
 - Irrigating landscapes a maximum of one inch per week.
 - Preventing water waste, runoff and watering impervious surfaces.
 - Watering plants deeply to encourage root growth.
 - Washing only full loads in clothes and dishwashers.
 - Using spring-loaded nozzles on garden hoses.
 - identifying and repairing all water leaks.
 - watering shrubbery the minimum amount required.
 - limiting vehicle and boat washing to the minimum.

- Refraining from washing down outside areas such as sidewalks, patios, and the like
- Using showers for bathing rather than baths and limiting showers to no more than four minutes.
- Refraining from leaving faucets running while shaving or while rinsing dishes.
- Installing water-flow restrictive devices in showerheads.
- Using disposable and biodegradable dishes.
- Installing water-saving devices such as plastic bottles or commercial units in toilet tanks to reduce volume.
- Ensuring toilet flapper valves are not leaking. This flapper can be checked by adding a food coloring to the toilet tank and visually checking to see if the color appears in the bowl. If it does show color the toilet is leaking.
- Storing drinking water in refrigerator to avoid trying to run it cool from the tap.

Stage 2 - Mandatory Reductions I

- All customers are expected to reduce their water use by 10% in comparison to their previous month's water bill.
- In addition to continuing to encourage all voluntary reduction actions, the following restrictions apply:
 - Irrigation is limited to a half inch per week between 8PM and 8AM.
 - Outdoor use of drinking water for washing impervious surfaces is prohibited.
 - All testing and training purposes requiring drinking water (e.g. fire protection) will be limited.
 - The use of water for washing or cleaning of equipment including vehicles, boats and fleet vehicles is prohibited unless water use is deemed essential to maintain the safe operational use or equipment integrity.
 - The use of water for power washing of buildings and other structures is prohibited, except for paint prep only (permit required).
 - The use of water from fire hydrants and hose bibs is prohibited, except for:
 - ③ Fighting fire and fire protection purposes;
 - ③ Testing or training fire fighters if it is necessary to protect public safety.
 - ③ Construction site hose bibs.
 - The filling of family, public or private swimming pools, including hot tubs, spas and whirlpool tubs, is prohibited, except for the minimal amount of make-up water necessary to maintain a pools structural integrity and filtration system.

Stage 3 - Mandatory Reductions II

- Customers must continue actions from all previous stages and further reduce water use by 20% compared to their previous month's water bill.
- All non-essential uses of drinking water are banned and garden and landscape irrigation must be reduced to the minimum amount necessary for survival.
- No using water outside of structures for any use other than emergencies involving fire.
- No introducing water into swimming pools.
- No use of fire hydrants except for fighting fire.
- All other uses of water will be limited to uses necessary to meet the essential health and safety needs of the people of Surf City.
- No serving water in restaurants except upon request.
- Encourage use of disposable utensils and plates in homes and restaurants.
- Additionally, in Stage 3, a drought surcharge of 1.5 times the normal water rate applies.

Stage 4 - Emergency Reductions,

- Customers must continue all actions from previous stages and further reduce their water use by 25% compared to their previous month's water bill.
- A ban on all use of drinking water except to protect public health and safety is implemented and drought surcharges increase to 2 times the normal water rate.

Stage 5 - Water Rationing

The goal of Stage 5, Water Rationing, is to provide drinking water to protect public health (e.g. residences, residential health care facilities and correctional facilities). In Stage 5, all customers are only permitted to use water at the minimum required for public health protection. Firefighting is the only allowable outdoor water use and pickup locations for distributing potable water will be announced according to Surf City's Emergency Response Plan. Drought surcharges increase to 5 times the normal water rate.

- It will be unlawful to fail to act in accordance with this section or use water contrary to this section or attempt to evade or avoid such water rationing restrictions.
- Fire protection will be maintained, but where possible, tank trucks shall use raw water.
- Close all swimming pools.
- No washing of any motor vehicles, including commercial washing.
- All industrial uses of water are prohibited.
- All other uses of water will be limited to those necessary to meet minimum health and safety needs of the customers.

IV. Triggers

The Town of Surf City's water source is groundwater. The following measurements of well pumping times and well levels in relationship to pump intake levels trigger entry into corresponding water restriction stages.

Stage	Well Operating Conditions
1	Pumping Time >10 hrs 20% reduction in seasonal normal distance from static water level and pump intake 20% increase pumping time for same output
2	Pumping Time >12 hrs 40% reduction in distance from static water level and pump intake 40% increase pumping time for same output
3	Pumping Time >14 hrs 60% reduction in distance from static water level and pump intake 60% increase pumping time for same output
4	Pumping Time >20 hrs 80% reduction in distance from static water level and pump intake
5	Water level at pump intake elevation

Return to Normal

When water shortage conditions have abated and the situation is returning to normal, water conservation measures employed during each phase should be decreased in reverse order of implementation. Permanent measures directed toward long-term monitoring and conservation should be implemented or continued so that the community will be in a better position to prevent shortages and respond to recurring water shortage conditions.

V. Enforcement

The provisions of the water shortage response plan will be enforced by Town of Surf City personnel and local law enforcement. Violators may be reported on the Town's Phone line. Citations are assessed according to the following schedule depending on the number of prior violations and current level of water shortage.

Water Shortage Level	First Violation	Second Violation	Third Violation
Voluntary Reductions	N/A	N/A	N/A

Mandatory Reductions (Stages 2 and 3)	Warning	\$250	Discontinuation of Service
Emergency Reductions	\$250	Discontinuation of Service	Discontinuation of Service
Water Rationing	\$500	Discontinuation of Service	Discontinuation of Service

Drought surcharge rates are effective in Stages 3, 4 and 5.

VI. Public Comment

Customers will have multiple opportunities to comment on the provisions of the water shortage response plan. First, a draft plan will be available at Town Hall for customers to view. A notice will be included in customer water bill notifying them of such. Also a draft plan will be published in *The Topsail Voice* and on the Town of Surf City website. Notice will be printed in all customer water bills to collect comments on the draft. All subsequent revisions to the draft plan will be published at least 30 days prior to an adoption vote by Surf City’s Town Council.

VII. Variance Protocols

Applications for water use variance requests are available from the Town of Surf City website and Town Hall. All applications must be submitted to the Town Hall for review by the Town Manager or his or her designee. A decision to approve or deny individual variance requests will be determined within two weeks of submittal after careful consideration of the following criteria: impact on water demand, expected duration, alternative source options, social and economic importance, purpose (i.e. necessary use of drinking water) and the prevention of structural damage.

VIII. Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the Surf City water shortage response plan will be determined by comparing the stated water conservation goals with observed water use reduction data. Other factors to be considered include frequency of plan activation, any problem periods without activation, total number of violation citations, desired reductions attained, and evaluation of demand reductions compared to the previous year’s seasonal data.

IX. Revision

The water shortage response plan will be reviewed and revised as needed to adapt to new circumstances affecting water supply and demand, following implementation of emergency restrictions, and at a minimum of every five years in conjunction with the updating of our Local Water Supply Plan. Further, a water shortage response planning work group will review procedures following each emergency or rationing stage to recommend any necessary improvements to the plan to Surf City's Town Council. The Town of Surf City Manager is responsible for initiating all subsequent revisions.