

**Water Shortage Response Plan
Rockingham County, North Carolina
May 24, 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. Rockingham County operates two distribution systems, each of which obtains its water supply from two different sources:

US 220 Water System	NC3079031 Source: Town of Madison
US 158 Water System	NC0279050 Source: City of Reidsville

I. Authorization

The Rockingham County Manager shall enact the following water shortage response provisions whenever the trigger conditions outlined in Section IV are met. In his or her absence, the Director of Engineering and Public Utilities will assume this role.

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. Notification

The following notification methods will be used to inform water system employees and customers of a water shortage declaration: employee e-mail announcements, call water system operator by phone, notices at municipal buildings and notices in water bills. Required water shortage response measures will be communicated through local news outlets and PSA announcements on local radio and cable stations. Declaration of emergency water restrictions or water rationing will be communicated to all customers by one or more of the following methods: phone communication, direct mail or distribution of informational pamphlets.

. 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 follow 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.

In 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; and identifying and repairing all water leaks.

In 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; and all testing and training purposes requiring drinking water (e.g. fire protection) will be limited.

In 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.

In 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. All irrigation is prohibited under Stage 4.

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 Rockingham County's Emergency Response Plan. All irrigation is prohibited under stage 5.

IV. Triggers

Rockingham County is provided water solely by purchase from the City of Reidsville and the Town of Madison. When Reidsville and/or Madison declares a water shortage, Rockingham County is required to do so as well. During this time Rockingham County Director of Engineering and Public Utilities will stay in close contact with Reidsville and Madison to follow their triggers.

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 the Rockingham County Department of Engineering and Public Utilities and law enforcement personnel. Violators may be reported to the County's dedicated water conservation hotline. 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	\$500
Emergency Reductions	\$250	\$500	\$1000
Water Rationing	\$500	\$1000	\$1500

VI. Public Comment

Customers who have questions or concerns regarding the water shortage policy can address those to the Department of Engineering and Public Utilities (Ronnie Tate, rtate@co.rockingham.nc.us). Customers will be notified of any changes to this policy.

VII. Variance Protocols

Requests for water use variances must be submitted in writing to the Rockingham County Engineering and Public Utility Department, and it is strongly encouraged that customers first contact this office prior to submittal of the variance in order to follow all necessary application procedures. All variance requests will be reviewed by the Director of Engineering and Public Utilities 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.

. Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the Rockingham County 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.

VIII. 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 and/or as required to address potential concerns that may be presented during the completion of our annual Local Water Supply Plan for each system. 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 Rockingham County's Board of Commissioners. The Rockingham County Director of Engineering and Public Utilities is responsible for initiating all subsequent revisions.