



CITY OF OXFORD WATER SHORTAGE RESPONSE POLICY

A policy authorizing the declaration of water shortage, establishing procedures and measures for the conservation of water resources, and prescribing penalties by the City of Oxford Board of Commissioners

Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the City's availability of water; authorize the declaration of a water shortage; establish procedures and measures for the conservation of water resources, and prescribe penalties for failure to conserve water.

Required water shortage response measures will be communicated through notices at municipal buildings, in water bills, on the City's website homepage, and published in a newspaper of general circulation in the area which qualifies under GS 1-597 and publicized through the general news media or any other appropriate method for making such announcements public. Declaration of emergency water restrictions or water rationing will be communicated to all customers by use of CodeRed notifications.

Section 2. Definitions

- (a) "Allotment" as the term is used in this policy shall mean the maximum quantity of water allowed for each customer over any applicable period as established in the water rationing provisions of this policy.
- (b) "Customer" as the term is used in this policy shall mean any person using water for any purpose from the City of Oxford's water distribution system and for which a regular charge is made.
- (c) "Emergency" as the term is used in this policy shall mean that water supplies are below the level necessary to meet the normal need and that serious shortages exist in the area.
- (d) "Excess Use" as the term is used in this policy shall mean the usage of water by the water customer in excess of the water allotment provided under the water rationing provision of this policy for that customer over any applicable period.
- (e) "Mandatory Conservation" as the term is used in this policy shall mean that raw water supplies are consistently below seasonal averages; and if they continue to decline, may not be adequate to meet normal needs.
- (f) "Non-Residential Customer" as the term is used in this policy shall mean commercial, industrial, institutional, public, and all other such users with the exception of hospital and health care facilities.

- (g) "Rationing" as the term is used in this policy shall mean procedures established to provide for the equitable distribution of critically limited water supplies in order to balance demand and limited available supplies and to assure that sufficient water is available to preserve public health and safety.
- (h) "Residential Customer" as the term is used in this policy shall mean any customer who receives water service for a single- or multi-family dwelling unit. The term residential customer does not include educational or other institutions, hotels, motels, or similar commercial establishments.
- (i) "Voluntary Conservation" as the term is used in this policy shall mean that conditions exist which indicate the potential for serious water supply shortages.
- (j) "Water" as the term is used in this policy shall mean water available to the City of Oxford from the Kerr Lake Regional Water System by virtue of its water rights or contract or any treated water introduced by the City of Oxford into its water distribution system and offered for sale.
- (k) "Water Use Classes" as the term is used in this policy shall be established as follows:
- Class 1 - Essential
 - Domestic Use – water necessary to sustain human life and the lives of domestic pets and maintain minimum standards of hygiene and sanitation.
 - Health Care Facilities – patient care and rehabilitation.
 - Public Use – fire hydrants for firefighting. Flushing of sanitary sewer and fire hydrants to ensure public health and safety.
 - Class 2 - Important Uses
 - home use
 - minimal hand watering of vegetable gardens
 - irrigation for commercial vegetable gardens and fruit orchards or the maintenance of livestock
 - watering by commercial nurseries at a minimum level necessary to maintain stock.
 - use of water at a minimum rate necessary to implement vegetation following earth moving, where such vegetation is required by law or regulation
 - watering of golf course greens
 - municipal and commercial pools
 - commercial car and truck washes
 - commercial laundromats
 - restaurants, clubs, and eating-places
 - air conditioning: refilling and make-up water during the cooling season
 - schools, churches, motels/hotels, and similar commercial establishments

- Class 3 - Non-Essential Uses

Ornamental purposes – fountains, reflecting pools, and artificial waterfalls.

Outdoor Non-Commercial Watering (public or private) – lawns, golf courses except greens. Non-commercial washing of motor vehicles.

Public Use – fire hydrants except as listed in Class 1.

Section 3. Declaration of Voluntary Conservation

Whenever the City of Oxford is notified by the Kerr Lake Regional Water System (KLRWS) that a potential shortage of water supply is indicated, the City shall be empowered to declare that voluntary conservation conditions exist. The Director of the Kerr Lake Regional Water System shall, on a daily basis, monitor the supply and demand upon that supply and notify the Director of Public Works of the City of Oxford or his designated representative of same.

In addition, the Mayor or his/her agent is authorized to call upon all water customers to employ voluntary water conservation measures to limit water use, especially non-essential use.

Section 4. Declaration of Mandatory Conservation

Whenever the City of Oxford is notified by KLRWS that the raw water supply (i.e., reservoir level) to be consistently below seasonal average, and if they continue to decline may not be adequate to meet normal needs, the City shall be empowered to declare that mandatory conservation conditions exist. The City of Oxford shall continue to encourage voluntary water conservation measures, and further shall impose a ban on all Class 3 Non-Essential water uses for the duration of the shortage.

Section 5. Declaration of a Water Shortage Emergency

Whenever the City of Oxford is notified by KLRWS that the raw water supply is below the level necessary to meet normal need and that serious shortages exist, it shall be empowered to declare that a water shortage emergency exists. Class 1 Essential Uses shall be identified in specific as targets for voluntary conservation initiatives. Also, all Class 2 Important Uses shall be reduced by levels determined by the governing body. All Class 3 Non-Essential Uses will remain banned. These restrictions shall continue until the emergency is declared ended by the governing body.

Section 6. Declaration of Rationing

Whenever the City of Oxford has declared a water shortage emergency and finds a need to provide for the equitable distribution of critically limited water supplies in order to balance the demand of limited supplies and to assure that sufficient water is available to preserve public health and safety, it shall be empowered to provide for mandatory rationing.

Section 6A - Objectives of Rationing

A policy that provides for mandatory rationing shall state findings that:

- (a) It is imperative that all water customers achieve an immediate further reduction in water use in order to extend existing water supplies and at the same time assure that sufficient water is available to preserve the public health and sanitation and to provide for fire protection.
- (b) The plan provides for an equitable reduction in water usage and equal sacrifice on the part of each water customer. The success of this policy depends upon the cooperation of all water customers in this emergency situation.

Section 6B - Water Use Rationing for Residential Users

(a) Metered Residential Customers and Allotments

1. Each dwelling unit (household) shall be allotted 4000 gallons per month.
2. Residential water customers will be required to provide the City of Oxford and utility personnel with reasonable access to read meters as necessary to this rationing declaration. Where access is not readily available, all reasonable efforts to contact customers in order to arrange for access to read meters shall be made.
3. If it is found that the residential water allotment provided under this section would create an extraordinary hardship for individual customers, as in the case of special health-related requirements, a revised allotment for that particular customer may be established. Any person aggrieved by a decision relating to such an exemption or variance may file a complaint with the City Manager in accordance with the City of Oxford's normal administrative procedures.

(b) Suggested Conservation Measures:

1. Indoor Residential Use

Conservation for Voluntary and Mandatory Conservation Phases

- Use dishwashers only when they are full
- Use full loads only in washing machines
- Turn off faucets while brushing teeth, etc. Do not use the toilet as a trash can.
- Use sink and tub stoppers to avoid wasting water
- Keep a bottle of chilled water in the refrigerator for drinking
- Find and fix leaks in faucets and water-using appliances
- Adapt plumbing with flow restricting or other water-saving devices
- Learn to read your water meter so you can judge how much water you use and what a difference conservation makes
- Take shorter showers and shallow baths
- Reduce the number of toilet flushes per day

- Don't use a garbage disposal
- Use laundry water for watering lawns and plants
- Turn off the shower while soaping up
- Use disposable eating utensils

2. Outdoor Residential Use

(a) Conservation for Normal Conditions

Lawns

- Water before 10:00 a.m. to prevent evaporation that occurs during the hottest part of the day. Morning is better than evening since dampness encourages the growth of fungus.
- Water only when lawn shows signs of wilt. Grass that springs back when stepped on does not need water.
- Water thoroughly, not frequently; long enough to soak roots. A light sprinkling evaporates quickly and encourages shallow root systems. Water slowly to avoid a runoff.
- Don't let the sprinkler run any longer than necessary. In an hour, 600 gallons can be wasted.
- Allow a maximum of one inch of water per week on your lawn. To measure, place cake tins outside to collect rain and water from sprinklers.
- Use pistol-grip nozzles on hoses to avoid waste when watering flowers and shrubs.
- Aerate lawns by punching holes 6 inches apart; this allows water to reach roots rather than run off surfaces.
- Position sprinklers to water the lawn, not the pavement.
- Avoid watering on windy days when the wind not only blows water off target but also causes excess evaporation.
- Keep sprinkler heads clean to prevent uneven watering.
- Adjust sprinkler heads to simulate a gentle rain — sprinklers that produce a fine mist waste water through evaporation.
- Know how to turn off an automatic sprinkler system in case of rain.
- Use an alarm clock or stove timer to remind you to shut off sprinklers that don't have timers.

Vegetables and Flower Gardens

- Water deeply, slowly, and weekly. Most vegetables require moisture to a depth of 6 to 8 inches.
- Keep soil loose so water can penetrate easily.
- Keep weeds out to reduce competition for water.
- Put the water where you want it and avoid evaporation by using soil soakers or slow running hoses, not sprinklers.

Trees and Shrubs

- Water deeply using a soil soaker or drip irrigation.
- Water only when needed. Check the depth of soil dryness by digging with a trowel.
- Mulch to reduce evaporation. A 2" to 3" layer of wood chips, pine needles,

- grass clippings, or straw keeps the soil cool in summer.
- Dig troughs around plants to catch and retain water.
- Water trees growing in full sun more often than those in the shade. Apply water directly at the base.
- Do not fertilize during the summer. Fertilizing increases a plant's need for water.
- Postpone planting until fall or spring when there is generally less need for water.
- Install trickle-drip irrigation systems close to the roots of your plants. By dripping water slowly, the system doesn't spray water into the air. Use soil probes for large trees.
- Water when cloudy, at night, or even when a light rain is falling.

(b) Conservation for Voluntary Conservation Phase (in addition to measures listed above)

- Do not allow children to play with hose or sprinklers.
- Limit car washing.
- Be ready to catch rainfall that occurs. Place containers under drain sprouts.
- Use leftover household water, if available.
- Consider delaying the seeding or sodding of new lawns.

(c) Conservation for Mandatory Conservation Phase (in addition to measures listed above)

- Vegetable gardens and food trees should be given minimal amounts of water on an individual basis only.
- Do not water lawns and inedible plants.
- Do not use sprinklers.

Most outdoor watering is prohibited under Emergency Conservation conditions.

Section 6C - Water Use Rationing for Non-Residential Water Users

- (a) Non-residential customers include commercial, industrial, public, and all other such users with the exception of hospitals and health care facilities.
- (b) Non-residential water customers shall further reduce their water usage to 50 percent of use levels during the last metered recording.
- (c) It is the primary responsibility of each non-residential water customer to meet the mandated water use reduction goal in whatever manner possible including limiting hours or days of operation, if necessary.
- (d) Each non-residential water user shall provide access to City personnel for meter reading and monitoring of compliance with this policy. All reasonable efforts will be made to contact customers to arrange for access.
- (e) If the mandated further reduction in water usage cannot be obtained without imposing extraordinary hardship which threatens health and safety, the non-

residential customer may apply to the City of Oxford for a variance. For these purposes, "extraordinary hardship" means permanent damage to property or an economic loss which is substantially more severe than the sacrifices borne by other water users subject to this water rationing policy. If the further reduction would cause an extraordinary hardship or threaten health or safety, a variance may be granted by the City Manager, and a revised water use reduction requirement for the particular customer may be established.

- (f) Any person aggrieved by a decision relating to such a variance may file a complaint with the City Board in accordance with established procedures.
- (g) The City of Oxford will provide each non-residential customer with the following suggested means to reduce usage levels:
- Identify and repair all leaky fixtures and water-using equipment. Give special attention to equipment connected directly to waterlines, such as processing machines, steam-using machines, washing machines, water-cooled air conditioners, and furnaces.
 - Assure that valves and solenoids that control water flows are shut off completely when the water-using cycle is not engaged.
 - Adjust water-using equipment to use the minimum amount of water required to achieve its stated purpose.
 - Shorten rinse cycles for laundry machines as much as possible; implement lower water levels wherever possible.
 - For processing, cooling, and other uses, either re-use water or use water from sources that would not adversely affect public water supplies.
 - Advise employees, students, patients, customers, and other users not to flush toilets after every use. Install flow restrictors in showerheads and faucets.
 - Install automatic flushing valves to use as little water as possible or to cycle at longer intervals.
 - Place water-saving posters and literature where employees, students, patients, customers, etc. will have access to them.
 - Check meters on a frequent basis to determine consumptive patterns.
 - Review usage patterns to see where other savings can be made.

Section 6D - Water Use Rationing for Hospitals and Health Care Facilities

- (a) Each hospital or health care facility shall survey its water usage patterns and requirements and implement such additional conservation measures as may be possible without endangering the health of its patients or residents to achieve a further reduction in the institution's water usage.
- (b) The City of Oxford will provide each hospital and health care facility with the following suggested means to reduce usage levels:
- Reduce laundry usage or services by changing linens, etc. only when necessary to preserve the health of patients or residents.
 - Use disposable food service items.

- Eliminate, postpone, or reduce, as may be appropriate, elective surgical procedures during the period of emergency.

Section 6E - Enforcement of Water Rationing

- (a) The City of Oxford's Water and Sewer Department will have primary responsibility for monitoring compliance with the water rationing policy.
- (b) The following provision shall govern the implementation of temporary service interruption: in order to effectuate compliance with this policy, the City of Oxford is hereby authorized and required to plan and implement temporary service interruption to lawn sprinkler systems.
- (c) Any residential or non-residential water customer who exceeds the allotments established pursuant to this water rationing will be subject to the following excess-use penalties:
1. "Excess-use penalties" will be collected when the customer's use exceeds the water allotments established pursuant to the local water rationing declaration computed in accordance with the following schedule:
 2. Any monies collected through excess-use penalties shall not be accounted for as income but shall be placed in a reserve account that is dedicated to addressing water shortage problems and water conservation initiatives.
- (d) In addition to the excess-use penalty, non-compliance with the water rationing provisions of this policy will result in the following:
1. For the first excess use, a warning of possible discontinuation shall be issued to the customer by mail or hand delivery. A fine of \$0-\$100 may be imposed. Customer must provide justification for excessive use if it is anticipated it will continue.
 2. For the second or subsequent excess use, service to the customer may be terminated and a Fine for 2nd Offence \$100-\$250, 3rd Offence \$250-\$500, and 4th Offence - \$500-\$1,000 and requires Board approval to reconnect
 3. In determining the amount of civil penalties for a particular violation, the Public Works Director shall consider the following factors;
 - i. The duration and gravity of the violation
 - ii. Whether the violation was committed willfully or intentionally
 - iii. The prior record of the violator in complying or failing to comply with the water rationing
- (e) Meter reading schedules are authorized to be altered to assure adequate monitoring of compliance with this policy.

(f) Any customer or other person aggrieved by a decision or action imposing an excess-use penalty or other remedy for non-compliance with the requirements of the policy may proceed in accordance with the following provisions:

- The City of Oxford shall adopt procedures that provide an opportunity for the customer or aggrieved party to rebut the finding of a violation or to provide evidence of circumstances beyond the customer's control that resulted in the violation. A record of evidence regarding disputed violations shall be kept, and a written notice of the City of Oxford's final decision and action in such cases shall be provided to the customer or aggrieved party.

Section 7. Regulations

Any person who violates the provisions of this policy or who fails to carry out the duties and responsibilities imposed by this policy or who impedes or interferes with any action undertaken or ordered pursuant to this policy shall be subject to the following

(a) If the City Manager, City Engineer, Director of Public Works, or other City official or officials charged with implementation and enforcement of this policy or a water supply shortage resolution learns of any violation of any water use restriction imposed pursuant this policy, a written notice of the record shall be shall be hand delivered or mailed and to any other person known to the City of Oxford who is responsible for the violation or its correction. Said notice shall describe the violation and order that is to be corrected, cured, or abated immediately or within such specified time as the City of Oxford determines is reasonable under the circumstances.

1. If water is disconnected, a hearing may be requested by the customer charged with the violation, he or she shall be given a full opportunity to be heard; and,
2. The governing body or hearing officer shall make findings of fact and order whether service should be reinstated or not.

(b) A fee of \$50 shall be paid for the reconnection of any water service terminated.

Section 8. Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the City of Oxford 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, the total number of violation citations, desired reductions attained and evaluation of demand reductions compared to the previous year's seasonal data.

Section 9. 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 workgroup will review procedures following each emergency or rationing stage to recommend any necessary improvements to the plan to the City of Oxford Board of Commissioners. The City of Oxford Public Works Director is responsible for initiating all subsequent revisions.

Section 10. Severability

If any provision of this policy is declared unconstitutional or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the constitutionality of the remainder of the policy and its applicability to other persons and circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

Section 11. Effective Date

This policy shall take effect immediately upon adoption by the City of Oxford Board of Commissioners.

Section 12. Effective Period

This policy shall remain in effect until terminated by action of the City of Oxford Board of Commissioners.

Passed by the City of Oxford Board of Commissioners this 15th day of January 2019.

CITY of OXFORD

ATTEST:



Cynthia Bowen, City Clerk



Jacqueline vdH Sergent, Mayor