**TOWN OF ST. PAULS, NORTH CAROLINA, WATER SYSTEM**

**WATER SHORTAGE RESPONSE PLAN**

 **(updated September 2023)**

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**PREAMBLE**

This Water Shortage Response Plan has been designed to alleviate difficult judgement calls and allow for an orderly transition between response levels. It describes the classification of potable water uses, the various phases of use reduction and when restrictions will go into effect. This plan will also allow the Town of St. Pauls Water System and its customers to respond early to avoid the necessity for extreme measures.

Drought is the most common need for a plan, but not the only one. Treatment and or structure problems, such as line breaks, pressure drops, contaminants in the water system, acts of terrorism, vandalism and natural disasters can cause this system to require its customers to restrict water use for a short period of time.

Issues covered in this plan will include, but not be limited to, public involvement, events that trigger the plan, management practices and public education.

# SECTION 1: AUTHORITY TO IMPLEMENT

When conditions dictate that water demand on the Town of St. Pauls Water System may exceed supply and transmission capabilities, the Public Works Director may recommend to the Town Administrator (Debra McNeill Debra@stpaulnc.gov, 910-865-5164) that voluntary water conservation measures be implemented. The Town Administrator, following consultation with the Board of Commissioners, will declare a Stage I (Voluntary) Water Shortage Condition Advisory requesting voluntary water conservation by customers. In the event that voluntary conservation measures fail to relieve the demand on the system, the Town will advance to a Stage II (Mandatory) or Stage III (Emergency) Water Shortage Condition. The Town Administrator, following consultation with the Board of Commissioners, will, with or without the recommendation of the Public Works Director, declare that a Stage II or Stage III Water Shortage Condition exists. In the absence of the Town Administrator, the ORC (Daniel Holloman, 910-633-9432) can implement conservation measures and can declare Stage I, Stage II and Stage II water-shortage conditions.

# SECTION 2: NOTIFICATION OF WSRP ACTIVATION AND CONSERVATION MEASURES

A Water Shortage Advisory will be issued to all system employees and customers outlining the potential problem. Customers will be notified through means such as mailers, newspaper articles, radio and television reports, postings at the Town Hall and any other means deemed appropriate. The public will be requested to voluntarily conserve water or mandated to conserve water and set conservation goals as shown in Section 6 and prepare for decreasing supply.

# SECTION 3: FACTORS REQUIRING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WATER SHORTAGE RESPONSE PLAN

Several parameters or conditions may require the Town of St. Pauls Water System to begin the Water Shortage Response Plan. These include, but may not be limited to, significant reductions in the elevated tank, ground storage tank or well water levels, a significant increase in pump run times for the predetermined total flow at the wells, contaminants in the water system, acts of terrorism, vandalism, main breaks and natural disasters.

If the factors listed above reduce elevated tank, ground storage tank or well water levels, pump run times increase or any event or combination of events prevent the water system from delivering water, Water Shortage Response Plan Stages may be enacted in the following order:

 Stage I (Voluntary) – In the event that the Public Works Director determines that the water demand may exceed the supply for any of the reasons listed in Section 3, a State Mandate is handed down because of Statewide drought conditions, or if the elevated tank drops to (10) ten feet of storage or less, a Stage I Advisory may be implemented.

 Stage II (Mandatory) – In the event that a Stage I Water Shortage Condition is in effect and the elevated tank drops to (10) ten feet or less of storage and the ground storage tank drops to (15) fifteen feet or less of storage for more than (2) two hours, or 50% of the system wells run for more than 14 hours per day for three consecutive days, a Stage II Advisory may be implemented.

 Stage III (Emergency) – In the event that a Stage I Water Shortage condition is in effect and the elevated tank drops to (5) five feet or less of storage for more than (2) two hours, or if a 60% reduction in normal well levels is noted in one-third or more of the production wells, or if the pump times of one-third or more of the wells increase 60% in order to maintain previous rates, a Stage III Advisory may be implemented.

# SECTION 4: WATER USE CLASSIFICATION

In order to facilitate a fair and equitable Water Shortage Supply Plan, every water use will be governed into one of three classifications:

 Class I – Essential Water Uses

 These uses include, but may not be limited to, water use required to/for:

* Sustain human life and the lives of domestic pets.
* Maintain minimum standards of hygiene and sanitation.
* Health care uses necessary for patient care and rehabilitation.
* Firefighting, including training and drills as approved by the Town Administrator.

 Class II – Socially or economically important water use. These include, but may not be limited to water use to/for:

* Preserve commercial vegetable gardens, fruit orchards, nursery stock and live-stock.
* Outdoor commercial watering, public and private.
* Establishing vegetation, after construction/earth moving activities.
* Filling and operations of municipal or private swimming pools provided that these swimming pools serve 25 or more residents.
* Operation of commercial car washes, restaurants, laundromats, clubs, schools, churches and other similar establishments.

 Class III – Non-Essential Water Uses

 These uses include, but may not be limited to/for:

* Operation of water fountains, ornamentation pools and recreational pools that serve fewer than 25 persons.
* Non-commercial washing of motor vehicles, sidewalks, houses, etc.
* Non-commercial watering of gardens, lawns, parks, playing fields and other recreational areas.

# SECTION 5: STAGED WATER SHORTAGE RESPONSE PLAN AND WATER USE REDUCTION GOALS

When the Water Shortage Response Plan is implemented, the below staged approach will be followed:

 Stage I – Voluntary Conservation

 This Stage may be enacted when it is determined that one or more of the parameters outlined in Section 3 is met.

 Stage II – Mandatory

In the event that a Stage I Water Shortage Advisory is in effect and the conditions outlined in Section 3 are met, the Town Administrator may enact a Stage II Water Shortage Condition. If this occurs, the system customers will be promptly notified by any or all methods outlined in Stage I. All users will be required to adhere to the voluntary conservation measures as noted in Section 6. Class III uses will be banned. Class II uses will be limited as shown in Section 6. During Stage II, industrial facilities will be required to develop and demonstrate to the Public Works Director a Water Shortage Response Plan. This program should show at least, a 25% reduction in water usage.

Stage III - Emergency

 This Stage will commence with the issuance of a Water Shortage Emergency Declaration from the Town Administrator. System users will be notified by any or all of the methods noted in Stage I. All users will be required to use voluntary conservation measures outlined in Section 5. Class III uses will be banned, and Class II uses will be restricted as noted in Section 6.

 Industrial users will be required to implement their Water Reduction Program immediately.

# SECTION 6: WATER USE COMPLIANCE

Stage I – Voluntary Conservation

In the event a Stage I Water Shortage Condition is declared, the following guidelines shall be encouraged to be adhered to:

1. Limit car washing to a minimum.
2. Limit lawn and garden watering to that which is necessary for plants to survive.
3. Do not wash down outside areas such as sidewalks, patios, parking lots, service bays or aprons, etc.
4. Do not leave faucets running while shaving, brushing teeth or rinsing dishes.
5. Water shrubbery to the minimum required, reusing household water when possible.
6. Limit uses of clothes washers and dishwashers, and when used, operate fully loaded.
7. Use of showers for bathing, rather than a tub bath, and limit showers to no more than four (4) minutes.
8. The use of disposable and biodegradable dishes is encouraged.
9. The use of flow restrictive and water saving devices.
10. Limit hours of operation of water cooled air-conditioners.
11. All residents, businesses, and institutions are requested to temporarily delay new landscape work until the water shortage has ended.

Stage II – Mandatory Conservation

In the event that the Town Administrator issues a declaration of a Stage II Water Shortage Condition, in addition to the voluntary guidelines already in effect, it shall be unlawful to use water supplied by the Town of St. Pauls Water System in the following manner:

1. To water lawns, grass, shrubbery, trees, flowers and vegetable gardens, except in accordance with the following schedule set forth below for specific areas of the Town:
	* Addresses ending with an odd number (1,3,5,7,9) water on odd numbered dates.
	* Addresses ending with an even number (2,4,6,8,0) water on even numbered dates.

 Note: Such watering shall be done by handheld hose or container or drip irrigation system only.

1. To fill newly constructed swimming and/or wading pools or refill swimming and/or wading pools that have been drained.
2. To wash automobiles, trucks, boats, airplanes, or any other type of mobile equipment, including commercial washing.
3. To wash down outside areas such as streets, driveways, service station aprons, parking lots, office buildings, exteriors of existing or newly constructed homes or apartments, sidewalks or patios, or to use water for other similar purposes.
4. To use water from public or private fire hydrants for any purpose other than fire suppression or other public emergency.
5. To operate or induce water into any ornamental fountain, pool or pond or other structure making similar use of water.
6. To serve drinking water in restaurants, cafeterias or other food establishments except upon request.
7. To operate water-cooled air conditioners or other equipment that does not recycle cooling water, except when health and safety are adversely affected.
8. To use water for any unnecessary purpose or to intentionally waste water.

Stage III – Emergency Conservation

In the event the Town Administrator issues a declaration of Stage III Water Shortage Conditions, in addition to the restrictions for Stage I and Stage II Water Shortage Conditions, the following restriction shall also apply:

1. To induce water into any pool.
2. Use water outside a structure for any use other than an emergency involving a fire.
3. Fire protection to be maintained by drafting of ponds, rivers, etc., whenever possible.
4. The use of disposable utensils and plates is encouraged and recommended at all eating establishments.
5. To operate an evaporative air conditioner which recycles water except during operating hours of business.

# SECTION 6a: Exemptions during Mandatory Conservation

The mandatory watering restrictions shall not apply to: a) watering commercial containerized plants and commercial plant stock in trade maintained for resale; b) plantings installed before Mandatory phase. Property owners can obtain a 45-day Landscape Establishment Permit from the Town for the purpose of watering such plantings but can only water between 7:00 pm to 7:00 am on Wednesday and Sunday nights.

# SECTION 7: WATER SHORTAGE RESPONSE PLAN CANCELLATION

As the determining parameters decrease in severity and return to acceptable levels, the Town Administrator, after consultation with the Board of Commissioners and upon recommendation of the Public Works Director, may cancel the Water Shortage Response Plan in the reverse order of its implementation. This cancellation shall be promptly and extensively publicized by the same methods as noted in Section 2.

# SECTION 8: PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE--ENFORCEMENT

Stage I – Continued water consumption by Class III, non-essential users will result in a written notice of violation for the first offense and a $25.00 fine for each subsequent offense.

Stage II – Failure to adhere to the Stage II (Mandatory) required conditions will result in a written notice of violation for the first offense and/or a $50.00 fine. Thereafter, each violation increases by a factor of $50.00. Any violation past a fourth offense shall result in disruption of water service to the offending party until Stage II has been rescinded.

Stage III – Failure to comply with the mandates during Stage III will require the offending party to pay a $100.00 fine for the first offense, $350.00 for the second offense and disruption of service for the third offense.

In addition, residential users will be allotted 1,000 gallons per month, per person, per connection. If the user uses 1,001-1,250 gallons per month, per person, per connection, a surcharge of 25% will be added to the monthly bill. If the user uses 1,251-1,500 gallons per month, per person, per connection, a surcharge of 75% will be added to the monthly water bill. If the user uses 1,501 or more gallons per month, per person, per connection, a surcharge of 150% will be added to the monthly bill.

Industrial facilities will be required to reduce their monthly water consumption by 25% of the previous 12-month water consumption average to maintain the current water rate for the month. The average water use can be evaluated on an individual basis for facilities with seasonal demand fluctuations. A 10% - 24% water use reduction from the previous 12-month water use average will require the Town to impose a 25% surcharge on the monthly water bill. A 0% - 9% water use reduction from the previous 12-month water use average will require the Town to impose a 50% surcharge on the monthly bill. An increase of 1% - 25% above the previous 12month water use average will result in a surcharge of 100% added to the next monthly bill. Any amount used above 25% of the previous 12-month average water use will require the Town to add a surcharge of 150% to the monthly bill.

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| The Public Works Director is authorized to enforce mandatory aspects and procedures of the  |
| plan and to enforce and assess penalties for non-compliance | .  |

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| **Method of Evaluation**: after the date of voluntary or involuntary reductions, the Town Administrator will first look at aggregate monthly water bills to determine if reduction targets are met. If targets are unmet, Administrator will review individual accounts to determine who is and is not in compliance. Those not in compliance will be subject to enforcement penalties, outlined in section 8 above. |
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# SECTION 9: VARIANCES

The Town Administrator, or his/her designee, may, in writing, grant temporary variance for existing water uses otherwise prohibited under this Plan if it is determined that failure to grant such variance would cause an emergency condition adversely affecting the health, sanitation, or fire protection for the public or the person requesting such variance and if one or more of the following conditions are met:

1. Compliance with this Plan cannot be technically accomplished during the duration of the water supply shortage or other condition for which the Plan is in effect.
2. Alternative methods can be implemented which will achieve the same level of reduction in water use.

Persons requesting an exemption from the provisions of this Plan shall file a petition for variance with the Town of St. Pauls Water System within five (5) days after the Plan or a particular drought response stage has been invoked. All petitions for variances shall be reviewed by the Town Administrator, or his/her designee, and shall include the following:

1. Name and address of the petitioner(s).
2. Purpose of water use.
3. Specific provision(s) of the Plan from which the petitioner is requesting relief.
4. Detailed statement as to how the specific provision of the Plan adversely affects the petitioner or what damage or harm will occur to the petitioner or others if petitioner complies with this Plan.
5. Description of the relief requested.
6. Period of time for which the variance is sought.
7. Alternative water use restrictions or other measures the petitioner is taking or proposes to take to meet the intent of this Plan and the compliance date.
8. Other pertinent information.

Variances granted by the Town of St. Pauls Water System shall be subject to the following conditions, unless waived or modified by the Town Administrator or his/her designee:

1. Variances granted shall include a timetable for compliance.
2. Variances granted shall expire when the Plan is no longer in effect, unless the petitioner has failed to meet specified requirements.

No variance shall be retroactive or otherwise justify any violation of this Plan occurring prior to the issuance of the variance.

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| **SECTION 10: REVISION OF PLAN**— 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. Plan revision would be conducted by the Town Administrator and the Public Works Director or ORC.  |
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| **SECTION 11: PUBLIC REVIEW**---prior to adoption of the Plan the public is invited to review the Plan at Town Hall and to comment at any regularly scheduled Town Board meeting, up  |
| to and including the date of adoption | n.  |