

# Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## TOWN DECLARES DROUGHT EMERGENCY CONDITION

As a result of low river flow levels in the North Fork of the Shenandoah, **the Town of Strasburg hereby declares a *Drought Emergency Condition* and requires all residents and businesses to begin water conservation measures.**

In accordance with the Virginia Water Protection withdrawal permit issued by the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the provisions set forth by the Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Water Supply Plan, the Town of Strasburg is required to follow a drought response plan. Should river flow levels fall below a seven-day moving average of 90 cubic feet/second (cfs), the Town of Strasburg will declare a Drought Emergency Condition. As of October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the seven-day average flow dropped below the 90 cfs trigger level and the town has implemented the following mandatory drought conservation actions. The listed non-essential uses are prohibited for the duration of the drought emergency.

### DROUGHT EMERGENCY CONDITION

The following non-essential water use will be prohibited during periods of declared drought emergencies. Below each non-essential use is a list of exceptions. These prohibitions and exceptions will apply to uses from all sources of water. The conservation actions listed in the Drought Watch and Warning sections listed shall also become mandatory during a Drought Emergency Condition.

Water use restrictions shall not apply to the agricultural production of food or fiber, the maintenance of livestock including poultry, nor the commercial production of plant materials so long as best management practices are applied to assure the minimum amount of water is utilized.

- **Unrestricted non-commercial watering (public or private) Lawn Irrigation**  
*Conservation Measures to use in place of watering:*

- Mow lawns to 3 inches or more and leave clippings (higher cut encourages grass roots to grow deeper to hold soil moisture better than closely clipped lawn).
- Use mulch around plants to reduce evaporation.
- Aerate lawn to reduce evaporation.
- Avoid fertilizing your lawn. Fertilizer applications increase the need for water.
- Place rain barrels under gutter downspouts to collect water for plants.
- Do not plant new landscaping or grass.

*Exceptions:*

- Newly sodded and seeded areas may be irrigated to establish cover on bare ground at the minimum rate necessary for no more and a period of 60 days. Irrigation rates may not exceed one inch of applied water in any 7 day period. Consider delaying seeding or sodding of new lawns.
- Gardens, bedding plants, trees, shrubs and other landscape material may be watered with hand held containers not exceeding three (3) gallons in capacity. Watering may be done between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. to avoid the heat of the day. Do not use sprinklers.

- **Athletic Field Irrigation**

*Exceptions:*

- Athletic fields may be irrigated between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. at a rate not to exceed one inch per application of more than a total of one inch in multiple applications during any ten day period. All irrigation water must fall on the playing surfaces with no outlying areas receiving irrigation water directly from irrigation heads.
- Athletic fields may be irrigated between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. during necessary overseeding, sprigging or resodding operations at the minimum rate necessary for a period that does not exceed 60 days. Irrigation rates during this restoration period may not exceed one inch of applied water in any seven day period.
- All allowed athletic field irrigation must be applied in a manner to assure that no runoff, puddling or excessive watering occurs.
- Irrigation is prohibited on athletic fields that are not scheduled for use within the next 120 days.

- **Use of water for the operation of ornamental fountains, artificial waterfalls, misting machines, and reflection pools.**

*Exceptions:*

- Fountains and other means of aeration necessary to support aquatic life are permitted.

- **Washing of buildings and paved surfaces such as streets, roads, sidewalks, driveways, garages, parking areas, tennis courts and patios.**

*Conservation Measures to use in place of washing:*

- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean driveways, walks and patios.
- Place rain barrels under gutter downspouts to collect water for general cleaning projects.

*Exceptions:*

- Surfaces may be washed with hand held containers not exceeding three (3) gallons in capacity. Washing should not occur during the heat of the day.
- As needed to ensure public health and safety and approved by the Town of Strasburg.

- **Washing or cleaning of mobile equipment including automobiles, trucks, trailers, and boats.**

*Conservation Measures to use in place of washing:*

- Place rain barrels under gutter downspouts to collect water for car washing.

*Exceptions:*

- Mobile equipment may be washed at car washes that utilize reclaimed water as part of the wash process or reduce water consumption by at least 10% when compared to a similar period when water use restrictions were not in effect. Any facility operating a reclaimed water system must prominently display, in public view, a sign stating that such a recycling system is in operation.
- Mobile equipment may be washed using hand held containers not exceeding three (3) gallons in capacity or hand held hoses equipped with automatic shutoff devices provided that no mobile equipment is washed more than once per calendar month and the minimum amount of water is utilized.
- Automobile dealers and rental agencies may wash cars that are in inventory no more than once per week utilizing hand held containers not exceeding three (3) gallons in capacity, hoses equipped with automatic shutoff devices, automated equipment that utilizes reclaimed water as part of the wash process, or automated equipment where water consumption is reduced by at least 10% when compared to a similar period when water use restrictions were not in effect.

- **Serving water in restaurants, clubs, or eating places.**

*Exceptions:*

- May only be allowed at the specific request of the customer.

- **Filling and topping off outdoor swimming pools.**

*Exceptions:*

- Newly built or repaired pools may be filled to protect their structural integrity.
- Outdoor pools operated by commercial ventures, community associations, recreation associations, and similar institutions open to the public may be refilled as long as:
  - Levels are maintained at mid-skimmer depth or lower.
  - Any visible leaks are immediately repaired.
  - Backwashing occurs only when necessary to assure proper filter operation.
  - Deck areas are washed no more than once per calendar month (except where chemical spills or other hazards occur).
  - All water features (other than slides) that increase losses due to evaporation are eliminated, and

- Slides are turned off when the pool is not in operation.
  - Swimming pools operated by health care facilities used in relation to patient care and rehabilitation may be filled or topped off.
- Recommended INDOOR water consumption measures:
    - Using automatic dishwasher only when load is full.
    - Installing faucet aerators, low-flow shower heads, and water efficient toilets.
    - Avoiding running water to get cold temperature; keep a pitcher of cold water in the refrigerator.
    - Minimizing use of garbage disposal.
    - Limiting showers to 5 to 10 minutes / day / person.
    - Wrapping hot water heater and pipes with insulating materials

It should be noted that these are MANDATORY water conservation measures and restrictions. Anyone found in violation of the Emergency Drought restrictions are subject to penalties as established by the Town Code Section 86-40 and Section 86-41.

Should additional, mandatory measures be required, citizens will be notified. Please contact the Town office with any questions, and monitor the Town's website and social media outlets for additional information.