



For more information:

We've compiled a list of frequently asked questions that may help you achieve your goal of water conservation; however, if you have additional questions please email the Water Conservation Specialist at savewater@brentwoodca.gov

To learn more about how you can reduce your water use, visit our Water Conservation page at www.brentwoodca.gov/savewater



[SaveWater Home Page](#) | [City Home Page](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Water Conservation FAQs

Answers to frequently asked questions.

What is Stage I – Stage III of the City's Water Shortage Contingency Plan?

Stage I

During Stage I, water alert conditions are declared and voluntary water conservation is encouraged. The City has an ongoing public information campaign that relies on the distribution of literature, speaking engagements, bill inserts, and conservation messages in local newspapers and on the City's Water Conservation web page. The drought situation is explained to public and government bodies through these information campaigns. In addition, the City explains other stages, forecasts future actions, and requests voluntary water conservation. Educational programs in area schools are ongoing.

Stage II

During Stage II, the water supply shortage is moderate (10 percent to 20 percent). Conservation may be voluntary, consist of allotments, and/or include mandatory conservation rules. The level of action increases with the level of shortage. For example, if Stage II is to be implemented, all of the provisions in Stage I shall also be implemented. The City aggressively continues its public information and educational programs. The City asks for a 10 percent to 20 percent water use reduction, either voluntary or mandatory. If necessary, the City also supports the passage of drought ordinances.

Stage III

During Stage III, the water supply shortage is considered severe (20 percent to 35 percent). Conservation consists of allotments and mandatory conservation rules. This phase becomes effective upon notification by the City that water usage is to be reduced by a mandatory percentage. The City adopts drought ordinances and implements mandatory reductions. Rate changes are implemented to penalize excess usage.

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Why has the City adopted Stage III of the Water Shortage Contingency Plan?

Facing a fourth-consecutive dry year and severely reduced water supplies, on April 1, 2015, Governor Jerry Brown mandated an aggregate statewide 25% reduction in potable urban water use. This unprecedented action reflects the severity of the drought and what is needed from all Californians to ensure conservation-minded water use can be met.

In response to the Governor's Executive Order and the subsequent State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) drought regulations, the City adopted a Resolution at the April 12, 2016, Council meeting which requires customers to reduce potable water use by 28% from the amounts used in 2013.

What are the water use restrictions?

- No watering between 8:00 a.m.– 7:00 p.m.
- No watering more than 2 days per week
- No watering within 48 hours after measurable rainfall
- No excessive landscape runoff
- No washing vehicle, trailer, boat without a shutoff nozzle
- No washing paved or hardscape surfaces
- No water use for non-recirculating fountains
- No watering new home construction landscape except by drip or microspray
- No watering ornamental turf on public street medians
- No serving drinking water except upon request in eating or drinking establishments
- No hotels/motels daily laundering of towels/linens unless requested by a guest

What are the outdoor irrigation restrictions?

Irrigation with City provided potable water is prohibited:

- Between 8:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. daily
- Within 48 hours after measurable rainfall
- More than 2 days per week

When do I start watering twice a week?

The restrictions, including no watering more than two days per week, are in effect now. If you have an automatic timer, set it to water only two days per week.

The City recommends using the cycle and soak method to water. It reduces run-off and gives more time for absorption. On standard pop-up spray sprinklers, use short 4-6 minute cycles about an hour apart, early in the morning.

Is the City itself complying with the restrictions?

City staff is working toward compliance with these restrictions. City landscape areas irrigated with potable water have been cutting back on irrigation to meet the 40% target. Areas utilizing recycled irrigation water are marked with signage. City staff is working to increase this signage to inform residents of the areas irrigated with recycled water.

The City is also performing the following to conserve water:

- Converting irrigation customers from potable to recycled water where feasible.
- Requiring contractors to use recycled water instead of potable water at construction sites.
- Temporarily suspending hydrant flushing except where necessary.
- Using recycled water for sewer cleaning except when responding to overflows and emergencies.
- Complying with potable water irrigation restrictions at all City facilities (many are irrigated with recycled water).



Is the **28%** reduction of potable water use mandatory?

Yes, the City must reduce potable water used by 28%. By limiting irrigation to 2 days per week, the City should reach this goal.

How can I conserve water and reduce by **28%**?

The largest use of water for most customers is outdoor water use. We recommend focusing your conservation efforts on outdoor water use while maintaining your conservation-minded indoor water use. By reducing irrigation to one or two days per week, it can accomplish an immediate reduction of 15-28% or more.

Upgrading old appliances, such as clothes washers and toilets, to water-efficient models will also help you save water. [Rebates](#) are also available to help with the cost of upgrades.

Why is 2013 used as a baseline, and how can I find my 2013 water use?

The State Water Resources Control Board has mandated that water suppliers use 2013 as the baseline to compare their reduction. To find your 2013 potable water use, call Billing at [\(925\) 516-5415](tel:9255165415) or visit [2013 Usage](#).

Does the City currently have active water cops?

No. The City's job is to encourage conservation and help eliminate water waste. Sometimes neighbors need nudging, or a leak is going unnoticed. Help us by [reporting problems](#) or waste such as leaks. Or by using Brentwoods REPORT IT app available on the App store or Google Play.

If I get reported for not complying with the restrictions such as excessive irrigation run-off or watering at the wrong time of day, will I get issued a fine?

It is the City's intent to educate through outreach and community involvement prior to the issuance of any penalties. City staff will hang a door tag as a friendly reminder as a first level of contact.

The Resolution adopted by City Council states that prior to the issuance of an infraction citation, the City will utilize the administrative enforcement program with an emphasis on resolving the matter through personal contact, education, and notices prior to the imposition of any fine. If a fine is imposed, the citation would be \$100 for the first, \$200 for the second and \$500 for the third and subsequent violations. There is also an appeal process to a hearing officer. This is the same process for administrative citations.

Do the drought regulations apply to non-potable water?

No, the drought regulations do NOT apply to non-potable water, and it is not subject to the time of day restrictions. Non-potable water has not been treated and is not suitable for drinking. All residential customers receive potable water from the City, and the City now provides free recycled water to residents who can transport it themselves through the [Recycled Water Fill Station](#).

Do the restrictions apply to golf courses?

The golf courses located within the City limits use non-potable water for irrigation. The water is supplied to them from East Contra Costa Irrigation District.

The Roddy Ranch Golf Course, outside the City limits, is supplied with non-potable water from the City; and they have targeted a 30% reduction of water use.

If my lawn and plants don't survive, will the City reimburse me?

No, the City will not be reimbursing residents for yards impacted by the drought. Plants and lawn may stress, however, they should survive the two days a week watering limitation. Trees are being hard-hit by the drought too, and will require occasional deep watering to remain alive. To reduce water running off your lawn and landscape, use the cycle and soak method to water. On standard pop-up spray sprinklers, use short 4-6 minute cycles about an hour apart, early in the morning.

You may continue to water your lawn. You may need to adjust the time of day you water and correct any runoff conditions.

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Are there rebates to replace my lawn with drought resistant landscaping?

A lawn replacement program, is available through the City's [Convert for Cash Water Conservation Rebate Program](#).

Rebates for removing lawn are up to \$1,000 for single-family residential properties and up to \$5,000 for commercial and multi-family residential properties.

Some homes in Brentwood pay property taxes to the Contra Costa Water District and are eligible for rebates and programs offered through the Contra Costa Water District. You can check your property tax bill to determine if you are eligible.

Rebates are also available from the State of California www.saveourwaterrebates.com/

My HOA won't allow me to have a brown lawn, what should I do?

Assembly Bill 2100 prohibits an association from imposing a fine for yard maintenance issues related to under-watered plants and lawns during any period for which the Governor has declared a state of emergency due to drought. The City is working with all the major Homeowner Associations in town to help them conserve water. To get your HOA involved call [516-5373](tel:516-5373).

My HOA controls the watering in the front yard. It's out of my hands, will I be penalized?

HOA's are not exempt from the Prohibited Activities for water use and the outdoor irrigation restrictions. The City is working with all the major Homeowners Associations in town to help them conserve water. To get your HOA involved, call [516-5373](tel:516-5373).

Will I get penalized for having a water leak?

No, not if it's fixed in a timely manner. Brentwood Municipal code states that a customer or their agent has 48 hours to address a water leak on their property before penalties can be incurred.

Can I fill my pool?

There are no restrictions on filling a pool. You will not receive a penalty for filling a pool.

How are we notifying/educating water customers about the restrictions and what they can do to save water?

Information is on City and State websites. Additionally, notifications will be made via:

City website, www.brentwoodca.gov/savewater

- Bill messages
- Drought Update Mailer
- Newspaper Advertisements
- Press Releases

Water Operations provides water conservation services for residents including site surveys, free water-efficient fixtures and educational materials. For more information visit www.brentwoodca.gov/savewater.

What is the High Use Notification Program?

Accounts are reviewed and when a customer has a high consumption rate the account is flagged. City staff then contacts that customer to help review their usage and see if leaks or other factors are at play.

I haven't made any changes in my water use. Why did my water usage jump?

Water use can increase for many reasons; you may have a leak. The City suggests you learn to read your water meter and check for leaks. Most customers see an increase in summer water use due to outdoor water use. For more information visit our [Water Conservation Reference Information](#) page.

Where can I get more information or request help with my water conservation?

The City's [SaveWater](#) webpage is filled with useful information and ideas for saving water, along with links to other water conservation websites. Materials are also available in print form by calling 925-516-5373, Monday – Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., or accessing the City's [Conservation Publications page](#).

Find and Fix Leaks

Follow these tips to find leaks inside or outside your home.

Turn Off the Water

Before you look for leaks, make sure no water is being used inside or outside of your home.

Locate Your Water Meter

Most Brentwood residential water meters are located in the front of the home between the street and the sidewalk. The first step is to check your water meter for movement. Look at the top of the meter. You'll notice a triangle or small dial called a flow indicator. The black triangle or red dial (low flow indicator) will move whenever water is passing through it. If your meter doesn't have a low flow indicator, you can use the sweep hand on the register to indicate water loss. If either the low flow indicator or the sweep hand is moving, you may have a leak or malfunction.

Check Your Toilets

Locating a leak is a process of elimination. Shut off one toilet at a time at the wall. In between each shutoff, go out to the water meter and check your flow indicator. If the flow indicator stopped moving, that means the toilet is the culprit. If the flow indicator is still moving, that toilet is not the problem. Something else is causing the water flow.

Check Your Irrigation System

Shut off the valve that serves your sprinkler system. Check the flow indicator at the water meter. If the flow indicator stopped moving, the sprinkler system is the problem.

Check Your Water Softener and other appliances

Most softeners have a bypass lever. Turn the lever to allow water to bypass the softener. Check the flow indicator at the meter. If the flow indicator is no longer moving, you have isolated the leak to your softener. (You also can check for leaking water-cooled air conditioners, ice machines and reverse osmosis units by turning the bypass lever on each and checking the meter.

Check Your Main Service Line

First, you need to find your water shutoff valve. This is usually located at the spigot where the water enters the home. Shut off the valve, cutting off all water to your home, and go in the house and turn on a faucet to make sure the water is off. Check the flow indicator at the meter. If the flow indicator is moving, the leak is between the shutoff valve and the water meter.

Now What?

If you are not able to find the leak, call a professional plumber to locate and fix the leak(s). If you find a simple leak like your toilet flapper or kitchen faucet, you may want to fix the problem yourself.

Pool and Spa Tips

A properly managed pool or spa can be an appropriate use of water. Use these tips to help save water and money.

Cover your Pool

An exposed pool loses 50 to 70 gallons of water per square foot per year to evaporation. During the hot summer months, you may lose up to 4 inches of water each week. Pool covers reduce evaporation by 90 percent, limit windblown debris and conserve energy. [Rebates](#) are available for pool covers.

Protect the Pool From Wind

Wind exposure can increase evaporation in uncovered pools. Plant trees and shrubs that buffer your pool, but won't shed or drop leaves in the water.

Maintain Pool Filters

Wash cartridge filters when your pump operating pressure increases by 10 psi (pounds per square inch). You can wash cartridges on landscape areas since chlorinated pool water is diluted with clean water. Never allow wash water to run into the street and down the storm drain.



Manage Water Quality

Test pool and spa water frequently and maintain appropriate chemical balances.

Heat Pool Conservatively

Warmer water means higher evaporation rates. Professionals recommend 78 degrees Fahrenheit as the ideal recreational pool temperature.

Test for Leaks

This four-step bucket test may help you determine if you have a leak or a high evaporation rate.

- Turn off the automatic fill valve.
- Place a bucket on a step where the bucket rim is at least a few inches above the water line. Place a heavy weight in the bucket and add water until the water level inside the bucket is equal with the water level in the pool.
- Leave the bucket and pool undisturbed for several hot days, then compare the water level in the bucket to the water level in the pool.
- If the water level in the bucket is noticeably higher than the water level in the pool, you may be losing water to a leak. Contact a pool leak detection specialist.

Drain to the Sanitary Sewer

A pool or spa should never be drained into the street. When you drain your pool or spa to the sanitary sewer, you allow the water to be cleaned and used again, rather than wasted. Additionally, pool chemicals are harmful to aquatic life in waterways, so pool water should not be drained into the street.