



## Drought Guidance for the Public

Persistent drought conditions in New Hampshire have historically led to residential well failures and public water supply problems. Cutting out non-essential water use and using water more efficiently during a drought are significant means of mitigating drought conditions. Below are tips for conserving water, as well as information and resources in the case of a water supply emergency.

To stay informed on the latest drought conditions and current drought-related information, visit the [NHDES Drought Management Program webpage](#).

### Abide by Water Restrictions

Abide by water restrictions implemented by your municipality or public water system and consider recommendations made by state agencies. Pursuant to [RSA 41:11-d](#), municipalities, including village districts, have the authority to restrict lawn watering during a drought. Also, pursuant to [Env-Dw 503](#), community water systems have authority to implement water restrictions beyond lawn watering. The purpose of these types of restrictions is to ensure the community's essential and critical needs continue to be met, as well as to prevent water shortages for residents relying on private wells due to another household's non-essential water use.

Your community or water system will inform you of restrictions and provide restrictions to NHDES for posting on the [NHDES Drought Management Program webpage](#).

### Water Conservation

Residential water use is the largest consumptive water use in New Hampshire outside of energy production. Average indoor water use per capita in New Hampshire is approximately 63 gallons per day. In the summer, total water use increases to 93 gallons per capita per day due to outdoor water use, which can mostly be attributed to lawn watering. Some communities have a higher proportion of in-ground irrigation systems and experience doubling of water use in the summer. This means that during a drought, residents can reduce typical summer water use by 30-50%, which is a significant reduction of stress on water supplies. Example water conservation efforts include the following:

- Cut out non-essential uses such as outdoor water use for lawn watering, car washing and pressure washing.
- Conserve water by cutting back on shower times, only doing full loads of laundry when necessary, and turning off the faucet while brushing teeth, doing dishes and washing hands.

NHDES Web Site: [www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov)

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- Replace old water fixtures and appliances that are wasting water. Top-loading washing machines built before 2003 and toilets older than 1994 are known to be the largest water-wasting culprits in the home. Showerheads older than 1994 can also waste a great deal of water, as can older bathroom sink aerators. Selecting ENERGY STAR® certified machines and replacing old water fixtures with EPA WaterSense certified fixtures is an easy way to ensure you are choosing products that will save water and perform. For guidance on selecting ENERGY STAR® and WaterSense certified products and more water efficiency tips, see the [NHDES water efficiency fact sheets](#).
- Fix leaks, including running toilets. Running toilets can waste hundreds of gallons a day. Old and worn toilet flappers are often the culprit and are very easy to replace. Also, some toilet leaks can't be heard. Check for a leak by dropping food coloring (12 drops) or a leak detector dye tablet in the toilet tank. Do not flush for 15 or 20 minutes. If the dye shows up in the bowl, you know that your toilet is running.



### **Recommendations for Households on Residential Wells**

All wells are susceptible to the impacts of drought, and households with their own wells that fail may incur substantial expenses to improve or replace their wells. Be prepared.

Detailed drought guidance for households on residential wells, including accessing emergency locations for water supply, financial assistance programs for very low income households, well improvement options and how to find a certified water well contractor can be found in the document, [Drought Guidance for Homeowners on Residential Wells](#).

### **For Additional Information**

For additional information, please contact the NHDES Drinking Water and Groundwater Bureau at (603) 271-2513 or [dwgbinfo@des.nh.gov](mailto:dwgbinfo@des.nh.gov) or visit [www.des.nh.gov](http://www.des.nh.gov).

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