



January 27, 2012

This past year was the driest 12-month period in Texas history. Although recent rains and cooler temperatures have offered some temporary relief, water supplies have been down and have not yet been replenished. The drought is predicted to continue through mid-summer. These projections make it critical that the region prepare for water shortages.

Recently, our water district had projected that the City of Rockwall and surrounding cities may move into Stage 4 of the District's Drought Contingency and Water Emergency Response Plan as soon as April of this year. Through stepped up conservation efforts by the City, residents and businesses, and what little rain we have received, NTMWD is no longer recommending implementing Stage 4 in April. The latest projections now indicate that Stage 4 may not be necessary until June. The District will keep a close eye on our lake levels, the precipitation received, and future forecasts to determine if or when we will be asked to enter Stage 4.

The City will continue to make information available as a responsible partner with our residents and businesses that will be affected by Stage 4. Even though Stage 3 of the plan has been extended, the City cannot encourage new landscaping and encourages continued water conservation efforts.

The City implemented Stage 3 of the Drought Contingency Plan on November 1, 2011:

- Limit landscape watering with sprinklers or irrigation systems to no more than once every other Saturday. An exception is allowed for landscape associated with new construction that may be watered as necessary for 30 days from the date of the certificate of occupancy, temporary certificate of occupancy, or certificate of completion.
- Foundations, new landscaping, new plantings (first year shrubs and trees) may be watered for up to two hours on any day by a hand-held hose, a soaker hose, or a dedicated zone using a drip irrigation system.
- Prohibit washing or rinsing of vehicles by hose except with a hose-end cutoff nozzle.
- Prohibit hosing of paved areas, buildings or windows. (Pressure washing of impervious surfaces where a health issue may be present is permitted.)
- Prohibit using water in such a manner as to allow runoff or other waste.

- Prohibit planting of cool season grasses (such as rye grass or other similar grasses) that intensify cool season water requirements.
- Wait until current drought has passed before establishing new landscaping and no hydro-seeding, hydro-mulching or sprigging is allowed.
- Watering of golf courses using treated water is prohibited except as needed to keep greens and tee boxes alive. (The Shores Country Club uses raw water from the City of Dallas and their watering will not be restricted by the City of Rockwall.)
- Registered and properly functioning ET/Smart irrigation systems and drip irrigation systems may irrigate without restrictions. (Go to [www.rockwall.com/green](http://www.rockwall.com/green) to print ET/Smart irrigation system registration form.)
- Public athletic fields used for competition may be watered twice per week.
- Restrictions do not apply to locations using treated wastewater effluent for irrigation or the legal use of water pumped from Lake Ray Hubbard as may be regulated by the City of Dallas. Locations using other sources of water supply for irrigation may irrigate without restrictions.
- Existing swimming pools may not be drained and refilled (except to replace normal water loss.)

If Stage 4 is enacted there will be no outdoor watering allowed, except foundations and trees. New landscaping would be at risk of not surviving the hot summer ahead. The City realizes this could have an economic impact on our residents and businesses that purchase landscaping and the businesses that supply landscaping. Planting that requires little or no water as found in xeriscape practices is highly recommended when Stage 3 restrictions have been lifted.

It is likely that Stage 4 will include some or all of the following provisions:

- Prohibit commercial and residential landscape watering, except foundations and trees may be watered for up to 2 hours on any day with a hand-held hose, a soaker hose, or a dedicated zone using a drip irrigation system.
- ET/Smart controllers and drip irrigation systems used for landscape irrigation are not exempt from this requirement.
- Prohibit the irrigation of new landscaping using treated water.
- Prohibit washing of vehicles except as necessary for health, sanitation, or safety reasons.

- Prohibit golf course watering with treated water except for greens and tee boxes (The Shores Country Club uses raw water from the City of Dallas and their watering will not be restricted by the City of Rockwall).
- Prohibit construction permits for private pools. Pools already permitted may be completed and filled with water. Existing private and public pools may add water to maintain pool levels but may not be drained and refilled.
- If NTMWD has imposed a reduction in water available to Member Cities and Customers, impose the same percent reduction on wholesale customers.
- Avoid plantings that require water to establish and sustain growth until drought restrictions have been lifted.

As the details of Stage 4 are finalized, more information will be provided.

We all need to work together to embrace water conservation as top priority. Your cooperation has been greatly appreciated for your efforts thus far, and into the next few critical months. It is imperative that we conserve as much water as possible to ensure we have sufficient amounts of water for the health, public safety, fighting fires and sanitation.

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