

Alert

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection has issued a Drought Watch for Northern New Jersey and is urging residents to conserve water.

A Drought Watch is an administrative designation made by the Department when drought or other factors begin to adversely affect water supply conditions. A Watch indicates that conditions are dry but not yet significantly so. During a drought Watch, the Department closely monitors drought indicators (including precipitation, stream flows and reservoir and ground water levels, and water demands) and consults with affected water suppliers.

The Watch designation is used to alert the public about deteriorating conditions; at the same time, water-supply professionals are reminded to keep a close eye on conditions and update contingency plans in the event that dry conditions continue or worsen. The public is encouraged to practice wise water use in order to preserve supplies.

Water Conservation: Ideas for Saving Water

New Jersey is often referred to as being “water rich” since we typically receive about 45 inches of precipitation annually. However, rainfall varies from year to year and even regionally within the state (the hilly northwest is generally wetter than the coastal plain to the southeast). Despite fairly abundant precipitation in most years, increased customer demands quickly deplete water reserves in even moderately dry years.

Summer outdoor water use increases dramatically as people water lawns and gardens, wash cars, and fill swimming pools. From May thru September, when hotter, drier weather conditions prevail, it is even more important to conserve water in order to avoid shortages and disruptive (and costly) water use restrictions.

By using water wisely, we can preserve more water in reservoirs and aquifers while sustaining levels in our streams, lakes and rivers. These water savings are simple to put into practice and enhance recreational uses and aesthetic enjoyment while providing and protecting habitat for our wildlife. They also can reduce the amount of public dollars spent on water supply infrastructure while minimizing energy costs and the unnecessary generation of greenhouse gases.

Follow these QUICK TIPS to Reduce Water Waste:

- Water lawns (and outdoor plants) less frequently (2-3 times per week) for no more than 30 minutes. This allows the soil to absorb the water and enables roots to grow more deeply, which encourages drought tolerance;
- Never water during the heat of the day, as this promotes evaporation and leads to water waste;
- Sprinkler systems should be set to water after sunset or before dawn, and by law should be equipped with an automated shut-off switch that disables the system following rainfall.
- Install water-saving showerheads and faucet aerators in the bathroom and kitchen (available at most home improvement stores and some supermarkets);
- Do not let faucets run when brushing your teeth or washing the dishes;
- Run washing machines and dishwashers only when they are full, or select the properly sized wash cycle for the current laundry load;

- Use a broom to sweep the sidewalk, rather than a hose;
- Use mulch and native plants to conserve water in the garden;
- Use a rain barrel to capture water from a downspout to use later for watering gardens and plants;
- Use soaker hoses or drip irrigation to water trees, gardens and flower beds;

For more detailed information on how you can conserve water in and outside your home, click on the link below. This site also includes related product information, environmental benefits and cost estimates, and a water use calculator to figure where you can conserve water in your daily routine.

h2ouse.org <http://www.h2ouse.org/>

Additional Information can be found at <http://www.njdrought.org>

Remember, if we all do a little, we can save a LOT!