



# Department of Environmental Protection

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Rebecca L. Tepper  
Secretary

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Commissioner

July 16, 2024

Subject: Mild Drought Conditions Declared for Massachusetts' Western Drought Region

Dear Water Management Registrants and Permittees in western Massachusetts:

On July 15, 2024, Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs Rebecca Tepper declared a **Level 1-Mild Drought in the Western Drought Region of Massachusetts** following two months of below-average rainfall. All other regions of the state – Connecticut River Valley, Central, Northeast, Southeast, Cape Cod and the Islands Regions – remain in Level 0 - Normal conditions.

As we continue to experience infrequent rainfall and intense temperatures this summer, it is important to take action to protect our water resources. By taking action early, and using water wisely, we can reduce stress on water resources strained by this season's intense heat. Proactively conserving water is not just a short-term solution, it is an important first step in addressing our changing weather patterns and climate change overall.

**If you hold a WMA registration or permit in the Western Drought Regions, please review any conditions pertaining to outdoor water use to determine if you are required to implement restrictions when the Drought Management Task Force declares Level 1 - Mild Drought or higher.**

**If you hold both a registration and a permit that includes seasonal restrictions on nonessential outdoor water use, then the restrictions required in your permit are controlling.**

- **Please note that Public Water Suppliers (PWS) that impose mandatory use restrictions are required to notify MassDEP, per 310 CMR 22.15(8).** MassDEP also requests that you provide notification when you impose voluntary water use restrictions. A MassDEP Notification of Water Use Restriction form can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/outdoor-water-use-restrictions-for-cities-towns-and-golf-courses#current-city-and-town-water-restrictions->.
- **Please send a completed form to:** Brittany Segill by email at [brittany.segill@mass.gov](mailto:brittany.segill@mass.gov), or by US Mail to Water Management Program, MassDEP, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114.
- **Please note that golf course registrants are required to notify MassDEP when you put your**

**Seasonal Demand Management Plan (SDMP) or other required restrictions in place. Permitted golf course operators should review their permit conditions to see whether the implementation of their SDMP requires that MassDEP be notified as well.**

The Notification of Water Use Restriction form for golf courses can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/outdoor-water-use-restrictions-for-cities-towns-and-golf-courses>.

- Please send completed golf course restriction forms to Linjun Yao at [linjun.yao@mass.gov](mailto:linjun.yao@mass.gov) or by US Mail to Water Management Program, MassDEP, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114.

**Any PWS having difficulty meeting demands**, drought-related or not, may request a Declaration of Water Supply Emergency (“Emergency Declaration”) from MassDEP. The provisions of the Emergency Declaration process are outlined in regulations at 310 CMR 36.40. Suppliers should contact their MassDEP Regional Drinking Water Program Chief (see contact information below), or Duane LeVangie of the WMA Program at (617) 780-1962, to discuss concerns or begin the Emergency Declaration process.

The Emergency Declaration will require the public water supplier to submit a plan for MassDEP review and approval that includes provisions to remedy the emergency. Such a plan could include measures to purchase water from another supplier, use emergency sources, implement aggressive conservation measures, and provide a mechanism to restrict nonessential outdoor water use for those PWSs that do not currently have enforcement capability to implement such measures.

MassDEP appreciates your efforts to conserve water and manage this valuable resource.

Very truly yours,

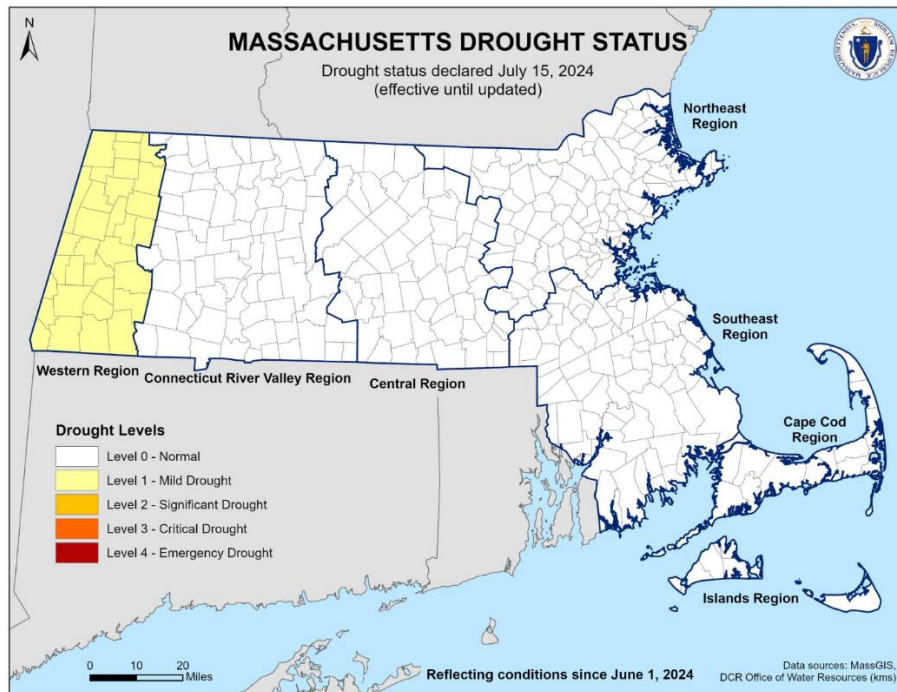


Kathleen Baskin  
Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Water Resources

Cc: Duane LeVangie, WMA Program Chief, DEP Boston (617) 780-1962  
Kristin Divris, Drinking Water Chief, DEP NERO (508-887-0021)  
Robert Bostwick, Drinking Water Chief, DEP CERO (508-849-4036)  
Jim McLaughlin, Drinking Water Chief, DEP SERO (508-946-2805)  
Andrew Kelly, Drinking Water Chief, DEP WERO (617-875-2710)  
Lealdon Langley, Director, BRP-DWM, DEP Boston  
Julia Blatt, Mass Rivers Alliance  
Jennifer Pedersen, MWWA  
Steve Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA

## Guidance for Public Water Suppliers and Golf Courses on Instituting Outdoor Water Use Restrictions

If you hold both a Water Management registration and a permit that includes seasonal restrictions on nonessential outdoor water use, then you are required to institute the restrictions detailed in your permit.



### Level 1 (Mild Drought):

**For Registered PWSs who do not also hold a permit requiring outdoor water use restrictions:** All nonessential outdoor water uses are restricted to no more than one day per week, before 9 a.m. and after 5 p.m., except that watering of ornamentals and flower gardens with drip irrigation, hand-held hose or watering cans may be permitted.

**For Golf Courses who do not also hold a permit requiring outdoor water use restrictions:** Irrigation of fairways shall be reduced to 80 percent of normal, irrigation of roughs shall be reduced to 50 percent of normal, and there shall be no irrigation of landscaping and ornamentals.

However, venues used for weddings or similar special events may water with hand-held hoses or drip irrigation as necessary to maintain gardens, flowers and ornamental plants.

For further information on water conservation and what residents and communities can do, visit the Massachusetts Drought Management webpage (<https://www.mass.gov/guides/drought-management-in-massachusetts>).