

North Metro Water Suppliers Urge Residents to Implement Water Reduction Actions

North Metro, Boulder County and the City and County of Broomfield water suppliers, including the Left Hand Water District, City of Boulder, City of Lafayette, City of Longmont, Town of Erie, City of Louisville, City of Arvada, Northglenn, Town of Superior, City of Thornton and Westminster are urging residents to consider ways to reduce water use at their home or business as spring and summer approach.

Despite the heavy snow that hit the front range in March, mountain snowpack is still below average in some areas, and streamflow levels are expected to be low-to-average in the upcoming season. As of March 23, 2021, dry conditions still cover 100% of the state with 62% of the state in severe, extreme, or exceptional drought categories, according to the U.S. Drought Monitor. The low-to-average levels of snowpack, coupled with 2020 being a record hot, dry year with wildfires that affected critical watershed areas has sent many North Metro areas into Drought Watch, where water conditions are closely monitored to make determinations on if water restrictions will be necessary.

All water customers in the North Metro area are encouraged to find ways to save water now to help prevent drought restrictions and maintain water supply throughout the summer.

The following are standard recommendations to help customers reduce water use, save money and protect future water supplies. Each community is different, please check with your local water supplier to ensure you are following all local water use rules.

1. **Wait to water lawns.** Don't turn on sprinklers too early in the season. Leaving lawns dormant longer will save water, and will not compromise the longevity of your lawn. April is too early to go automatic, plan on programming your sprinkler system to start in May or June. Hand-water trees and plants as needed - trees offer many benefits such as shade and habitat, and are often greatly impacted by drought, so keep an eye on the health of your trees and water them when needed.
2. **Water less frequently.** Check with your water supplier for water use rules. Watering twice a week will make grass roots grow deeper and allow the grass to last longer without water. Cycling sprinkler system run times can prevent excess water runoff; visual inspections after an initial watering cycle will make this apparent. An example of a better watering schedule is setting each zone to water for five minutes then wait an hour, water for five minutes again, wait one more hour then water for a final five minutes. This breaks up the 15 minutes of watering into three cycles, allowing the water to have time to absorb into dense and compact soils.
3. **Water in the evening, night or early morning.** Watering landscapes in the early morning or at night will help reduce water loss. During the daytime heat, less water will be available to plants due to loss from evaporation and wind. Please check with your local water provider for your current water restrictions, including watering hours.
4. **When it rains, water accordingly.** Watch the weather and adjust watering days and times accordingly. Use soil moisture sensors or rain sensors to automatically adjust watering schedules when it rains. Consider installing a WaterSense Smart Irrigation Controller. Check with your water supplier for potential rebates on irrigation equipment and other opportunities.
5. **Let grass grow longer before cutting it.** Raise lawn mower blades and protect lawns from heat by letting grass grow longer (3-3.5"). A taller lawn provides shade to the roots and helps retain soil moisture, so your lawn requires less water.

6. **Water lawns, plants and trees - not roads and sidewalks.** Check to see if your irrigation heads are broken, tilted or not set-up properly by scheduling an irrigation assessment. Sweep driveways and sidewalks with a broom instead of spraying with a hose - but please **not** down the storm drain or into the street gutter. Use hand-watering, deep root watering, or drip irrigation for trees, shrubs, bushes, perennial beds, annual flowers and vegetable gardens. Always use a shut-off nozzle on your hose when watering plants.
7. **Fix leaks.** Check your sprinkler system monthly for broken sprinkler heads and damaged irrigation lines. Hire a professional to conduct a sprinkler assessment - check with your water supplier, many have low cost or no cost sprinkler assessment programs for their community. A well maintained system will save both money and water.
8. **Plan ahead and plan efficiently.** If possible, delay new lawn installations for a non-drought year and avoid planting during the mid-summer heat. If you've already purchased a water-wise garden this year, plant early in the morning or evening in May. Incorporate water-wise plants and turf when planning landscape renovations or installations.

Every water system is unique. All water customers are encouraged to check with their water supplier for specific outdoor watering rules or restrictions, and for tools and resources to protect this resource, ensure our supply, and reduce homeowners' and businesses' impacts and bills.

