

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

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Watering Restrictions Continue, EPD To Allow Water Efficient Soaker Hoses And Drip Irrigation

The Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) announced today that restrictions on outdoor water use will remain in place across 55 north Georgia counties, including the metropolitan Atlanta area. However exemptions for drip irrigation and soaker hoses will be granted to give citizens more water-efficient options to help maintain healthy landscapes during drought.

“Drip irrigation and soaker hoses are high-efficiency outdoor watering devices and have proven to be effective tools in conserving water, particularly during drought,” said EPD Director Carol A. Couch. “We want to offer Georgians more watering choices, but also want to make it clear these exemptions will be withdrawn should water use rise significantly, or if the drought worsens.”

Under an Order issued by Director Couch, Georgians in the 55-county Level Four Drought Response area may water shrubs, trees and flower beds up to three days a week using drip irrigation systems and soaker hoses. Odd-numbered addresses may water on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. Even-numbered and unnumbered addresses may water on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. The exemption does not include turf grass, which requires more conventional types of irrigation that would use significantly more water.

According to state climatologist Dr. David Stooksbury, most of Georgia remains in various levels of drought with the most extreme conditions in the upper Savannah River Basin of northeast Georgia.

Communities and water utilities not dependent on Lake Lanier for their water supply may petition EPD for more lenient outdoor water use schedules. They must show evidence of water conservation through decreased water use and prove their water supplies are sufficient should conditions worsen. To date, 52 local governments, water utilities and industries have been granted watering schedules, ranging from one to three days per week for most types of water use. Those schedules are being extended until further notice. Lake Lanier-dependent communities, including metro Atlanta, are not eligible to petition for relief because the lake remains very low.

Water use in the Level Four area has dropped every month since November 2007 when compared to water use for the same month one year earlier. Rapidly deteriorating conditions and dangerously low lake levels prompted the Level Four Drought Response in September 2007.

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Under a declared **Drought Response Level Four**, most types of outdoor water use are prohibited with some commercial exemptions. In addition to the drip irrigation and soaker hose exemptions announced today, the EPD Director had already ordered exemptions to allow some limited landscape watering.

- Hand watering will be allowed for 25 minutes per day on an odd-even schedule between midnight and 10 a.m. Odd numbered addresses can water on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. Even numbered addresses can water Monday, Wednesday and Saturday. Hand watering is defined as one person with one garden hose.
- New landscape can be watered up to three days a week from midnight to 10 a.m. for a period of 10 weeks based on the odd/even schedule. Anyone wishing to water new landscape must register with the Outdoor Water Use Registration Program. The program is hosted on the Urban Agricultural Council web site at www.urbanagcouncil.com. Georgians may also contact their county extension agents for assistance in getting registered.
- In addition, local governments and water utilities that do not depend on Lake Lanier for water supply can petition EPD for more lenient outdoor water use schedules.

The level four drought response area includes Banks, Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Catoosa, Chattooga, Cherokee, Clarke, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, Dade, Dawson, DeKalb, Douglas, Elbert, Fannin, Fayette, Floyd, Forsyth, Franklin, Fulton, Gilmer, Gordon, Gwinnett, Habersham, Hall, Haralson, Hart, Heard, Henry, Jackson, Lincoln, Lumpkin, Madison, Meriwether, Morgan, Murray, Newton, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Paulding, Pickens, Polk, Rabun, Rockdale, Stephens, Towns, Troup, Union, Walker, Walton, White, Whitfield, and Wilkes counties.

Most of middle Georgia remains under a **Level Two Drought Response**. Under Level Two, outdoor water use may occur on scheduled days within the hours of 12:00 midnight to 10:00 a.m.

- Scheduled days for odd-numbered addresses are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.
- Scheduled days for even-numbered or unnumbered addresses and golf course fairways are Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.

The following uses are prohibited under Level Two:

- Using hydrants for any purpose other than firefighting, public health, safety or flushing.
- Washing hard surfaces, such as streets, gutters, sidewalks and driveways except when necessary for public health and safety.

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The level two drought response area includes Atkinson, Baldwin, Ben Hill, Berrien, Bibb, Bleckley, Burke, Butts, Calhoun, Chattahoochee, Clay, Coffee, Columbia, Crawford, Crisp, Dodge, Dooly, Dougherty, Glascock, Greene, Hancock, Harris, Houston, Irwin, Jasper, Jefferson, Jones, Lamar, Lee, Macon, Marion, Mc Duffie, Monroe, Muscogee, Peach, Pike, Pulaski, Putnam, Quitman, Randolph, Richmond, Schley, Spalding, Stewart, Sumter, Talbot, Taliaferro, Taylor, Telfair, Terrell, Tift, Turner, Twiggs, Upson, Warren, Washington, Webster, Wilcox, Wilkinson, and Worth counties.

A **Level One Drought Response** continues in south and coastal areas of Georgia. Under Level One, outdoor water use may occur on scheduled days within the hours of 12:00 midnight to 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 midnight.

- Scheduled days for odd-numbered addresses are Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.
- Scheduled days for even-numbered or unnumbered addresses and golf course fairways are Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.
- Use of hydrants for any purpose other than firefighting, public health, safety or flushing is prohibited.

The level one drought response area includes Appling, Bacon, Baker, Brantley, Brooks, Bryan, Bulloch, Camden, Candler, Charlton, Chatham, Clinch, Colquitt, Cook, Decatur, Early, Echols, Effingham, Emanuel, Evans, Glynn, Grady, Jeff Davis, Jenkins, Johnson, Lanier, Laurens, Liberty, Long, Lowndes, McIntosh, Miller, Montgomery, Mitchell, Pierce, Screven, Seminole, Tattnall, Thomas, Toombs, Treutlen, Ware, Wayne and Wheeler counties.

More information about the drought and water conservation can be found at www.georgiaepd.com, www.conservewatergeorgia.net and www.georgiadrought.org.

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