Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

100 Cambridge Street Suite 900 Boston, MA 02114 • 617-292-5500

Maura T. Healey
Governor

Kimberley Driscoll
Lieutenant Governor

Rebecca L. Tepper
Secretary

Bonnie Heiple
Commissioner

November 22, 2024

Dear Water Management Act PWS Registrants and Permittees:

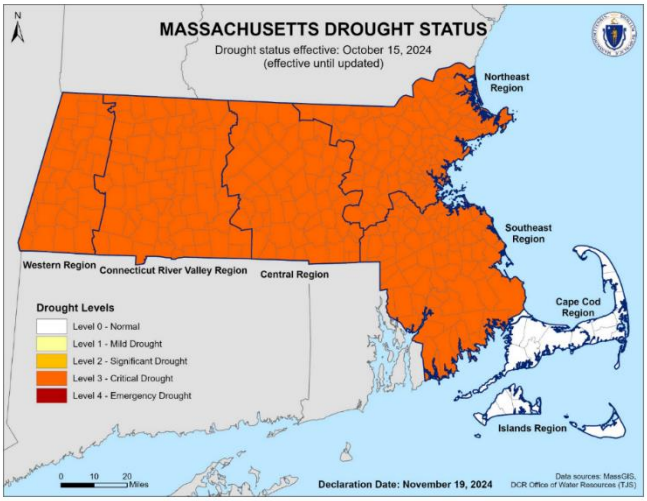
With precipitation at an unprecedented low over the last three months, Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Rebecca Tepper has elevated the Massachusetts' drought status to

- **Level 3 - Critical Drought in the Western, Connecticut River Valley, Central, Northeast and Southeast Drought Regions**

Placing most of Massachusetts in a Level 3-Critical Drought, except for Cape and Islands Regions.

During a **Level 3 - Critical Drought all nonessential outdoor water uses are banned.**

Please review any conditions pertaining to outdoor water use in your WMA permit or registration. 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**.



Although most restrictions on outdoor water use in Water Management permits expired on September 30th, MassDEP encourages everyone to continue to reduce water use at this time.

Public Water Suppliers (PWS) that impose mandatory use restrictions are required to notify MassDEP, per 310 CMR 22.15(8). PWSs that impose voluntary water use restrictions are asked to notify MassDEP as well. 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-. Send the completed form to Brittany Segill at brittany.segill@mass.gov, or by US Mail to MassDEP Water Management Program, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114.

As the drought persists, MassDEP urges all PWSs and their consumers to be mindful of the amount of water they are using, to reduce indoor water use, fix leaks as soon as possible, and conduct water audits to identify areas of potential water conservation. All these steps are needed now to help reduce water use to ensure essential needs such as drinking water and fire protection can be met, habitats have water to recover, and to prepare for the months ahead, including next summer, should dry conditions continue.

This information is available in alternate format. Please contact MassDEP at 617-292-5500.
TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370
MassDEP Website: www.mass.gov/dep

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Indoor Water Savings Suppliers should consider posting information on water saving tips on their websites for their customers. MassDEP's webpage includes a flyer on conservation tips that suppliers can use at https://www.mass.gov/doc/tips-for-saving-water-1/download. Suppliers can also post links to other water conservation sites that their customers might find helpful. The EPA WaterSense program offers useful information on water conservation at www.epa.gov/watersense/. A link to the state "Water Conservation Standards" developed jointly by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs and the Water Resources Commission may be found at: https://www.mass.gov/massachusetts-water-conservation-standards.

Leak Detection It is always a good idea to find and eliminate pipeline leaks, but it can be even more important during a drought. Accelerating a community's leak detection program this fall could result in water savings at time when it is needed most.

Water Main Flushing Flushing programs can be an important part of system maintenance and providing high quality water. However, during this ongoing drought, suppliers should consider delaying routine pipe flushing **if such a delay will not adversely affect water quality**. Deferring flushing during drought conditions both reduces water use and avoids sending a confusing signal to consumers when they are being urged to conserve water both indoors and outdoors.
Suppliers with mandatory flushing schedules or water quality concerns will want to continue their flushing program as weather conditions allow. If suppliers have any concerns about their pipe flushing program, they should contact the appropriate DEP Regional Drinking Water Program Chief (see contact information below) to discuss their program.

Emergency Response Plans With drought conditions persisting throughout the Commonwealth, now is a good time for PWSs to review Emergency Response Plans and assess preparedness to deal with drought conditions (and other extreme weather conditions). What interconnections exist with neighbors and have those connections been tested?

For more information on emergency response planning, visit http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/massdep/water/drinking/water-systems-ops.html.

Declaration of Water Supply Emergency Any PWS having difficulty meeting demands, drought related or not, may request a Declaration of Water Supply Emergency ("Emergency Declaration") from the Department. The provisions of the Emergency Declaration process are outlined in regulations at 310 CMR 36.40. Suppliers should contact their DEP 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.

An Emergency Declaration will require the PWS to submit a plan to remedy the emergency for MassDEP review and approval. The plan could include measures to purchase water from another supplier, use emergency sources, implement aggressive conservation measures, and provide a mechanism to restrict outside water use for those PWSs that do not currently have the ability to implement such measures.

Very truly yours,



Kathleen Baskin
Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Water Resources

Cc: Duane LeVangie, WMA Program Chief, DEP Boston (617) 780-1962
Melissa Dwinell, Drinking Water Chief, DEP NERO (857-278-5348)

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 Pederson, MWWA
Steve Estes-Smargiassi, MWRA
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Anne Carroll, DCR