



City of Livermore, Livermore Municipal Water Water Shortage Contingency Plan Stage 1 Frequently Asked Questions

In order to ensure that the City has an adequate supply of water during the drought, the Livermore City Council enacted Stage 1 of the Livermore Municipal Water, Water Shortage Contingency Plan at its February 24, 2014 meeting. The City offers these answers to frequently asked questions

1. *What is the Water Shortage Contingency Plan?*

The Water Shortage Contingency Plan identifies a variety of actions the City may take in response to both short- and long-term water supply challenges. The plan identifies four conservation levels, or Stages, along with suggested voluntary or mandatory conservation measures and activities to help preserve the water supply. As part of the Plan, the City Council can adopt higher “conservation” rates as another incentive to conserve water.

2. *Why did the City Council enact Stage 1 of the Water Shortage Contingency Plan?*

California has had three straight dry years, with 2013 being the state’s driest year in recorded history. The resulting critically low water supplies led Governor Jerry Brown to declare a drought emergency in January 2014. With the uncertainty regarding Livermore’s water supplies, the City Council enacted Stage 1 of the Water Shortage Contingency Plan. The Plan can be viewed at the following link:

<http://www.cityoflivermore.net/documents/Public%20Works/WaterShortageContingencyPlan.pdf>

3. *How does enactment of Stage 1 affect me?*

You are asked to voluntarily reduce the amount of water you use by 20 percent. Water rates remain unchanged at this time. If water supply conditions do not improve, the City Council may enact subsequent Stages of the Water Shortage Contingency Plan to increase the percentage reduction and types of conservation measures, and implement mandatory controls to ensure that there is an adequate supply of water for all customers.

4. *How much is a 20 percent reduction in water use?*

A 20 percent reduction for the average home translates to cutting usage by 75 gallons per day. A good rule of thumb is to reduce indoor water use by 5 percent or about 10 gallons per home per day, and achieve the rest of the reduction by cutting outdoor use. Ways to reduce indoor use include turning off water while brushing teeth, only running full loads of dishes and laundry, and taking shorter showers. Easily reduce outdoor use by cutting irrigation. For example, if you normally water 10 minutes a day, cut that to 5 minutes a day. Or instead of watering daily, water 3 or 4 days a week.

**5. Why do I hear about the snowpack when I hear reports on the drought situation?
What does snow in the Sierras have to do with Livermore's water supply?**

Much of the water supplied in the City of Livermore is purchased from Tri-Valley water wholesaler Zone 7 Water Agency, which imports more than 80 percent of the water used in the Tri-Valley from the State Water Project. A considerable portion of the imported water begins as snowmelt from the Sierras.

California typically receives about half its precipitation in December, January and February, and much of that precipitation is snowfall in the Sierras. The snowpack stores water during the winter months. As the snow melts, the snowmelt is captured and stored in State Water Project reservoirs. The ability to store the snowmelt is a critical factor in having adequate water supplies throughout the year.

Because of the persistent lack of snowpack, Zone 7 was notified at the end of January that allocations of water from the State Water Project had been reduced to zero. This is a serious loss of water supply as local groundwater and surface water sources normally supply only about 20 percent of the Tri-Valley's water needs.

6. Can't we just pump more local groundwater to make up for the loss of imported State Water Project water?

Groundwater, found in aquifers below the ground surface, isn't a limitless supply. If wells are pumped faster than the aquifer is replenished (recharged), the amount of groundwater in the aquifer is decreased. Without the imported water from the State Water Project, a significant large source of water used to recharge the local groundwater aquifers is lost.

7. If it rains, do I still need to worry about a drought?

Yes. Even if it rains, we are still far from having enough water to end the drought. Water supplies are so critically low that it would have to have been storming every other day through May for California to have anything resembling a normal year.

8. How can I obtain more information, and get other questions answered?

- a. Visit the City of Livermore Water Resources Division webpage at www.cityoflivermore.net/citygov/drought.asp where you will find additional information on the Water Shortage Contingency Plan, water conservation information, and a link to the California Department of Water Resources' drought webpage.
- b. Send an email to wrd_info@cityoflivermore.net.
- c. Call the City of Livermore Water Resources Division at 960-8100.
- d. Cal Water customers may also wish to contact Cal Water at www.calwater.com or 447-4900.