



15 Percent Water Conservation Target Rules

Q&A

Effective November 30, 2021

Resolution Extended November 8, 2022

Q: Why is there a 15 percent water conservation target in San José?

A: Extremely dry conditions in Northern California have led state, regional and local authorities to call for 15 percent reductions in water use. California's Water Year 2020 was dry in the northern two-thirds of the state, and the first six months of Water Year 2021 ranked as the fourth driest on record. Gov. Gavin Newsom has declared a drought emergency throughout California and called on Californians to reduce water use by 15 percent. Valley Water (Santa Clara Valley Water District) has also called for a 15 percent reduction in water usage countywide compared to 2019 water usage. The County of Santa Clara has declared a local emergency related to extreme drought conditions.

Q: Are the new San José drought rules mandatory?

A: Yes. These rules apply to all residents and businesses in San José regardless of which water retailer serves them.

Q: What are some of the new rules?

A: Outdoor water use is the easiest place to reduce water use since it accounts for roughly half of the average water bill.

- If using a sprinkler system, residents and businesses can only water outdoors on two designated days, and only before 10 a.m. and after 8 p.m.
 - Odd numbered addresses may water on Mondays and Thursdays;
 - Even numbered addresses may water on Tuesdays and Fridays;
 - Properties without an address may water on Mondays and Thursdays.
- If using a hand-held hose with an automatic shut-off nozzle or a drip irrigation system, residents and businesses can water outdoors before 10 a.m. and after 8 p.m., without a designated day restriction. (Watering in the cooler hours of the day helps reduce evaporation and allows plants and landscape to absorb more of the water.)
- Watering outdoors at other times is not allowed.
- There are some exceptions to these outdoor irrigation rules for maintenance of public parks, playing fields, daycare centers, golf course greens, and school grounds, provided such irrigation is done in a water-efficient manner, or for fire protection, soil erosion control, plants and trees grown for consumption, nursery and garden center plants for sale, and environmental mitigation projects.

Please view the full list of San José water use rules now in effect at www.sjenvironment.org/waterconservation

Q: Are there any other rules I should be aware of?

A: The City has additional water conservation measures that are always in effect regardless of drought conditions:

- Sprinklers cannot run more than 15 minutes per station per day.
- No excessive water runoff is allowed.
- Leaking or broken water pipes, irrigation systems, and faucets must have repairs initiated within five working days and repaired as soon as practical.
- No cleaning of structures or paved surfaces with a hose without a positive shut-off nozzle.
- No cleaning of vehicles with a hose without a positive shut-off nozzle.
- Commercial car washes must use water recycling equipment, a bucket and hand-washing, or a hose with positive shut-off nozzle.
- No serving water in food service establishments unless requested by the customer.
- Potable water cannot be used for building or construction purposes, such as dust control, without written exception by the City.
- Water cannot be used from a hydrant without prior City approval.
- Potable water cannot be used for irrigation purposes where a recycled water service is currently plumbed to the site

Q: Why can't I choose which watering day works best for me?

A: The designated two days per week watering schedule is based on a collaborative effort to have a consistent schedule to help reduce overall outdoor water conservation citywide.

Q: My water provider has different watering days than the City. Which days can I water?

If your residence or business is within the City of San José, you must follow the City of San José's watering days and restrictions, which apply citywide.

Q: How can homeowners determine their water consumption?

A: Homeowners can look at their bills sent from their water providers. Customer service agents from the water providers are available if there are any questions.

Q: How will these rules be enforced?

A: The City has an education-first approach, sharing water conservation rules and tips with the community. If a report of a resident/business not complying with drought rules is received, Valley Water or staff from the water provider will reach out to coordinate with the resident/business and provide information. Violations of the drought rules would be subject to citations of up to \$500 per violation.

Q: How do I report violations of drought rules?

A: Please report violations through the Santa Clara Valley Water District's hotline at 408-630-2000 or email at waterwise@valleywater.org. Water waste can also be reported through the online portal Access Valley Water at access.valleywater.org.