

**State of New Jersey
Water Emergency
Frequently Asked Questions**

1. Q. What can I do to conserve water?

A. Using water wisely both in and outside the home or office is essential at this time in order to stretch existing drinking water supplies, avoid unnecessary stress on sewerage facilities, and otherwise avoid a serious water shortage. In addition to the mandatory water use restrictions, there is much you can do to use water efficiently and greatly reduce water waste, so do your part to conserve water for your community, the State, and especially for those struggling to recover during this difficult time.

- Adhere to the mandatory water use restrictions: It's the law, and there are stiff penalties for non-compliance!
- To save water in the home, take shorter showers instead of baths, and turn off the faucet while brushing teeth and shaving. You should also fix leaky faucets and pipes, and install water conserving faucets and showerheads. Run washing machines and dishwashers only when full.
- Remember to check for local water use restrictions (which may be stricter) as well as guidance from your water supplier.

A complete list of water conservation tips appears on the NJ Drought web page (www.njdrought.org).

2. Q: I have a private well. Do the water use restrictions apply to me?

A: **Yes.** The restrictions, except for a very few exemptions to protect business activity and prior investments, while promoting a rapid recovery in the wake of Hurricane Sandy, apply to everyone regardless of whether your water comes from a private water company, a public water supplier or your own private well. The restrictions also apply equally to both groundwater and surface water sources.

3. Q: May I water my residential lawn or the lawn at my business?

A: **NO**, outdoor watering for lawns and landscapes is strictly prohibited, with very few exceptions, limited to the following:

- For testing purposes (5 minutes only) by a commercial contractor, following installation or repair of an irrigation system
- Sod or seeded lawn areas completed between October 1 and November 1, 2012, only by a professional landscaper during daylight hours
- For re-vegetated or bare soil areas associated with projects covered by the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Act, or otherwise for projects covered by a construction permit issued by the local authority
- Immediately following the application of fertilizer, pesticide or herbicide by a professional landscaper (limited to 20 minutes per area watered only on the day of application)
- The playing surface of athletic playing fields at schools, parks, churches, etc.

4. Q: Do the lawn watering restrictions apply to businesses and institutions as well as residences?

A: **Yes.** With an isolated exception for athletic playing fields at schools, arenas, and parks, the general lawn watering restrictions apply equally throughout the state.

5. Q: May I water my trees, shrubs, flowers or vegetable garden?

A: **No.** The mandatory water use restrictions have not been imposed due to drought conditions and such landscaping material can survive sufficiently while we act to preserve available water supplies for more urgent needs.

6. Q: I want to re-seed or overseed my lawn. Will I be allowed to water it if I do?

A: **No.** The very limited lawn watering exemptions aim to protect lawn areas that were previously seeded or sodded only.

7. Q: My town has its own restrictions. Do I have to follow the State restrictions too?

A: **Yes.** Some New Jersey municipalities and counties may have imposed their own water use restrictions, and you must follow both sets of restrictions. If both the State and local restrictions apply to the same activity, you must follow the stricter of the two. For example, if your town allows lawn watering on odd numbered calendar days, you still may not water your lawn because the State restrictions prohibit lawn watering except under very limited circumstances.

8. Q: I have noticed several lawns being watered in my area as well as a neighbor who regularly washes his car at home...what can I do?

A: Most residents recognize that we all share a responsibility to follow the water use restrictions and conserve as much water as possible. However, a small percentage of citizens may refuse to comply with the mandatory restrictions. Violations of the water use restrictions are a serious matter and constitute a criminal "Disorderly Persons" offense. A person found guilty of violating the water restrictions may be subject to fines ranging from \$1,000.00 to \$5,000.00, and/or receive a prison term of up to six months. Enforcement of the water use restrictions is the responsibility of the New Jersey State Police and local police departments.

9. Q: I have a commercial power washing business. May I continue to operate?

A: **Yes.** Businesses that are engaged in power washing as a principal part of their activities may continue to use water for such purposes.

10. Q: What is a "state of water emergency" ?

A: A water emergency can only be declared by New Jersey's governor. Typically, a water emergency is issued when drought conditions begin to threaten water supplies and efforts are taken to reduce water consumption and extend available supplies. In some cases, catastrophic events may damage water treatment or transmission infrastructure or otherwise hamper the ability of water systems to deliver a safe, reliable water supply.

In the present case, the energy supply network across New Jersey has been compromised by Hurricane Sandy, and many systems are operating with supplemental energy sources that are in critically short supply. The water emergency enables the governor and DEP commissioner to restrict water usage and otherwise act to protect the public health, safety and general welfare.

Under a water emergency, a phased approach to restricting water consumption is typically initiated, with restrictions typically targeting non-essential, outdoor water use. Although some indirect economic impacts may occur, the first phases of water use restrictions seek to avoid adverse impacts on the economy to the extent possible.