

Water Restrictions Frequently Asked Questions

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Why are restrictions needed?

When the Shoalhaven region experiences an extended dry period and the long term outlook by the Bureau of Meteorology indicates a lower than normal prediction for good rainfall, Council has a duty to follow the Drought Management Plan which encompass these events. In accordance with that Plan it is necessary to implement restrictions to ensure long term water security.

What should I do now?

There are many ways you can prepare your garden to manage on less water. In addition you can conserve water around the home. To learn about ways to conserve the amount of water you use, consider some of these tips:

- Remember to check that you are only watering your garden beds, not your driveways or paths.
- Use deep root watering (powerful jet into the roots) once per week.

What is a hard surface?

Houses, walls, windows, driveways and paths etc are all considered to be "hard surfaces" and in most cases are not considered to be high in prioritising water for essential purposes and therefore Level 1 bans this type of use.

Can I use water to wash down my house or windows?

No, a special variation is required.

Is water allowed to go onto a hard surface eg. from garden watering or washing?

This is seriously discouraged but can't always be completely avoided. If a sprinkler was left unattended

and water was flowing steadily off from a surface into drains then we should be contacted. A common sense approach is best, for example don't do watering during windy conditions, maximise the watering benefits by restricting watering to late afternoon and consider the weather forecast before deciding to water. Monitor the use of water even if sprinklers are attached to timers.

Can I wash my car, boat or caravan?

Privately owned cars, boats and caravans can be washed using a hand held hose but try and wash on a grassed surface. If they are washed on grass, it is not considered to be a hard surface.

Can I still wash my car on a driveway?

Yes, but limit water usage and use a trigger nozzle.

Can I still flush my boat motor after use?

Yes, motor flushing may be conducted as per car, boat and caravan washing above. Motors do not need to be flushed if being used daily.

I see wash down facilities being used at boat ramps, is this allowed?

Council will apply for special variation for these and other owned facilities as they are for community use. In the case of some wash downs, they may be required to limit exposure to algae or for health reasons. Shoalhaven Water and Council always encourage users to limit the amount of water at these facilities. Signage will be erected where necessary and monitoring will be conducted. The public are always encouraged to report issues which might cause water loss.

Can I top up my existing swimming pool/ external spa?

Yes, by hand-held hose or a hose fixed to a timer. Do not leave hoses unattended with the end in the pool, this will prevent backflow from occurring and protect our water supply. There should always be an air gap between the end of the hose and the water in the pool.

Can I fill a new swimming pool/external spa?

Yes, see above whilst in Level 1.

Are there standard watering times?

Not in Level 1 Restrictions for domestic use.

What if I have a drip-irrigation system, can I still use it and is it treated differently to a spray system?

Drip-irrigation, sprinklers and spray watering systems can still be used if fixed to a timer. Please consider when you use them eg not on a windy day.

Can I water new lawns or turf?

Yes, if using a sprinkler it must be fixed to a timer.

Can I use 'grey water' on my garden?

Yes, for more information visit the Shoalhaven Water website for tips on using grey water.

Are there any plants that are drought resistant?

Yes, contact your local nursery or contact Council to request a copy of our 'Plant Selection Guide' for more information on what plants are drought resistant.

What can I do if I see someone breaching the water restrictions?

Contact Shoalhaven Water on 1300 662 246 speak to an operator and provide the following information:

- Date and time of alleged breach,
- Property address, and
- Details of the breach.

You may remain anonymous if you do not wish to give your name. A Council Ranger will then follow up any breaches.

How long will the water restrictions remain in place?

Water Restrictions are lifted when:

- The long term forecast for rain is considered positive
- The three Council dams are full
- It is unlikely that water restrictions will be re-imposed within 3 months
- At least 3 weeks has elapsed following substantial rain to confirm the stable inflow into Tallowa
- The stable flow in the river is predicted or confirmed being greater than 135 ML/day
- If there is still some uncertainty after 3 weeks, move to ease until stable river flow can be confirmed

On approval to lift restrictions, the general community would be advised via local radio/print media.

What can I do to conserve water around my home?

Visit the Shoalhaven Water website for tips on conserving water.

At what stage do Level 1 Water Restrictions apply?

When Bamarang Dam is drawn down a release will be made from the Council's Danjera Dam to refill Bamarang Dam from the Burrier pumps. This will trigger Level 1 water restrictions and to increase the level of restriction for the Shoalhaven City.

What if I am not a commercial or community group, can I obtain an approved special variation?

An approved special variation may be provided if the use is for special circumstances outside the designated hours or purposes or the conditions of restrictions cannot be reasonably met. An application will be required and additional supporting documentation may be required.

How long does it take to receive a response to a special variation application?

Email details are sought as part of the application and responses will be returned within 2 working days.

How long does a special variation remain valid?

A special variation is only valid during the time specified on the application and approval. Further applications may be required as the variations will most likely be significantly more restricting during increased Levels.

What happens if I don't abide by the restrictions?

Council Rangers will be enforcing compliance with the water restrictions and additional support may be provided by private security companies. Breach of water restrictions may result with an imposition of fines in accordance with the Local Government Act up to a maximum for repeat offences of \$2,200.

Who do I call if I see a leak by the road or in a park reserve?

Call us as soon as you can to report the location.

Can water be drawn directly from the main?

Yes, water can be drawn directly from the main by standpipe users. Our standpipes are orange and metered for billing. If you see any other colour or have concerns about water extraction being lawful, call us.

Is it true that Sydney steal our water?

It is a common misconception that Sydney Water 'steal' our water.

Tallowa Dam is owned and operated by the NSW Government through Water NSW. During times of drought water can be transferred to Sydney to supplement their supply. However, there are limitations to this and much of the water stored in Tallowa Dam can only be used for Shoalhaven.

If you would like further information relating to Tallowa Dam visit our website under Community/ Recreation/Tallow Dam.

Do water restrictions apply if I'm using tank water?

If your property is connected to town water and you also have a tank installed, water restrictions will still apply regardless. Most water tanks have been installed as a consequence of the NSW Government BASIX requirements and they are generally connected to internal plumbing. These tanks will largely be

empty because of the extended dry conditions. Customers can top up rainwater tanks using the town water and this is why restrictions still apply.

If your property is not connected to town water and you have a water tank, restrictions do not apply.

Do water restrictions apply to the use of bore water?

Water restrictions do not apply if bore water is being pumped direct to gardens or lawns.

**For further enquiries phone
Shoalhaven Water's
Information Line
1300 662 246**