Drought Contingency Plan
For Domestic, Temporary, Landscape
Irrigation and Recreational Use Contracts

Lower Colorado River Authority

October 2015 Draft – For Board consideration in March 2024
Table of Contents

1.0 Declaration of Policy, Purpose, and Intent ................................................................. 3
2.0 Authorization ................................................................................................. 3
3.0 Public Education ..................................................................................... 3
4.0 Coordination with Regional Planning Groups ......................................................... 3
5.0 Notice Requirements ............................................................................. 3
6.0 Permanent Water Use Restrictions ........................................................................ 4
   6.1 Irrigation Schedule for Landscaped Areas ...................................................... 4
   6.2 Prohibition of Water Waste ............................................................................. 4
7.0 Initiation and Termination of Response Stages ...................................................... 4
   7.1 Triggering Criteria for Initiation and Termination of Drought Response Stages .... 5
8.0 Drought Response Measures ........................................................................... 7
   8.1 Targets for Water-Use Reductions .................................................................. 7
   8.2 Required Measures ...................................................................................... 7
9.0 Enforcement ................................................................................................. 14
   9.1 Enforcement Provisions ............................................................................. 14
   9.2 Variances ................................................................................................ 15

Appendix A: LCRA Board Authorization of LCRA Drought Contingency Plan

Appendix B: Drought Response Enforcement Process

Appendix C: Mandatory Watering Schedules
1.0 Declaration of Policy, Purpose, and Intent

The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) provides contracts to customers for water supply. In cases of extreme drought, periods of abnormally high usage, system contamination, or extended reduction in ability to supply water due to other reasons, LCRA may require water customers to institute temporary restrictions to limit non-essential water use. This Drought Contingency Plan (Plan) is designed to prolong the availability of water supply for critical needs during drought periods or other water supply emergencies.

This Drought Contingency Plan applies to the use of raw water supplied by LCRA to domestic and temporary water use contract holders (up to 10 acre-feet per year) and landscape irrigation and recreational use contract holders (up to 3020 acre-feet per year). The provisions of this plan do not apply to the use of water from another source such as potable water from a local supplier or rainwater.

Water uses regulated or prohibited under this Plan are considered to be non-essential and continuation of such uses during times of water shortage or other emergency water supply conditions is deemed to constitute a waste of water.

2.0 Authorization

The LCRA General Manager or his or her designee is hereby authorized and directed to implement the applicable provisions of this plan. The LCRA General Manager or his or her designee shall have the authority to initiate or terminate drought or other water supply emergency response measures as described in this Plan. (See Appendix A).

3.0 Public Education

The LCRA General Manager or his or her designee will periodically provide the customers subject to this Plan with information about this Plan, including the importance of the Plan, information about the conditions under which each stage of the Plan is to be initiated, processes used to reduce water use, and impending or current drought conditions.

4.0 Coordination with Regional Planning Groups

LCRA will provide a copy of this Plan to the Lower Colorado Regional Planning Group (Region K).

5.0 Notice Requirements

In accordance with the requirements of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), LCRA will notify the TCEQ executive director and LCRA General Manager in writing within five (5) business days of the implementation of any mandatory provisions of the Drought Contingency Plan, or on such another schedule as TCEQ may require.

LCRA Drought Contingency Plan for Domestic, Temporary, Landscape Irrigation and Recreational Use Contracts

March 2024 Board Approved – October 2015

Page 3
6.0 Permanent Water Use Restrictions

The following restrictions apply on a year-round basis.

6.1 Irrigation Schedule for Landscaped Areas

Irrigation of landscaped areas with hose-end sprinklers or in-ground irrigation systems shall be limited to the following schedule:

- Residential addresses ending in odd numbers: Wednesdays and Saturdays
- Residential addresses ending in even numbers: Thursdays and Sundays
- Commercial (including Homeowners and Property Owners Associations): Tuesday and Friday
- Watering times: Midnight to 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. to midnight
- No regular watering is recommended in the months of November through February.

6.2 Prohibition of Water Waste

Water waste is prohibited, including the following:

- Failure to repair a controllable leak, including a broken sprinkler head, a leaking valve, leaking or broken pipes, or a leaking faucet.
- Operating an irrigation system:
  - with a broken head.
  - with a head that is out of adjustment and spraying into a public street or parking area.
  - with a head that is fogging or misting because of excessive water pressure; or
  - between the hours of 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.
- Allowing water:
  - to run off a property and form a stream of water in a street for a distance of 50 feet or greater; or
  - to pool in a street or parking lot to a depth greater than one-quarter of an inch.

7.0 Initiation and Termination of Response Stages

The LCRA General Manager or his or her designee will monitor water supply conditions on a regular basis and will determine when conditions warrant initiation and termination of each stage of this Plan in accordance with LCRA’s Water Management Plan and LCRA’s Drought Contingency Plan for Firm Water Customers. Water supply conditions will be determined by the source of supply and weather conditions.

Public notification of the initiation or termination of drought response stages will be by a variety of means, including bill inserts, e-mail and/or mail automated telephone calls. LCRA also will, as needed, share information with the public on water supply conditions, water use and
7.1 Triggering Criteria for Initiation and Termination of Drought Response Stages

The following triggering criteria apply to all contracts covered by this Plan.

(1) STAGE 1 - Mild Water Shortage Conditions (Mandatory Measures) (Voluntary Measures)

A. Criteria Requirements for initiation — Customers will be asked required to implement the Stage 1 Drought Response Measures when the combined storage of Lakes Travis and Buchanan drops below 1.1 million acre-feet in accordance with the LCRA Drought Contingency Plan for Firm Water Customers (DCP).

B. Requirements Criteria for termination — Criteria for exiting Stage 1 is 1.2 million acre-feet combined storage increases above 1.2 million acre-feet. Customers may stop implementing Stage 1 measures when LCRA announces that Stage 1 restrictions under this Plan are no longer required.

(2) STAGE 2 - Moderate Water Shortage Conditions (Mandatory Measures)

A. Requirements Criteria for initiation: — Customers will be required asked to implement Stage 2 Drought Response Measures:

1. When the combined storage of Lakes Travis and Buchanan drops below 900,000 acre-feet; or in accordance with the LCRA DCP.
2. On March 1 or July 1, the combined storage is below 1.1 million acre-feet and the cumulative prior three-months of inflows total is less than the 25th percentile of historic inflows for that three-month period.

B. Requirements Criteria for termination — Criteria for exiting Stage 2 is combined storage increases above 1.1 million acre-feet combined storage. Customers may stop implementing Stage 2 measures when LCRA announces that Stage 2 restrictions under this Plan are no longer required.

Upon lifting of exiting Stage 2, a less restrictive stage may become operative.

(3) STAGE 3 - Severe Water Shortage Conditions (Mandatory Measures)
A. Requirements Criteria for initiation — Customers must implement the Stage 3 Drought Response Measures when the combined storage of Lakes Travis and Buchanan falls below 750,000 acre-feet, in accordance with the LCRA DCP, or

- The LCRA Board declares a Drought Worse than Drought of Record or other water supply emergency and orders the mandatory curtailment of firm water supplies.

B. Requirements Criteria for termination — Criteria for exiting Stage 3 is combined storage increases above 825,000 acre-feet combined storage. Customers may stop implementing Stage 3 measures when LCRA announces that Stage 3 restrictions under this Plan are no longer required.

Upon lifting of exiting Stage 3, Stage 2 will be in effect a less restrictive stage may become operative.

(4) STAGE 4 - Critical Water Conditions

A. Requirements Criteria for initiation — Customers must implement the Stage 4 Drought Response Measures when:

Combined storage of Lakes Travis and Buchanan reaches 600,000 acre-feet.

- The LCRA Board declares a prolonged drought worse than Drought of Record or other water supply emergency and orders the mandatory curtailment of firm water supplies at a level more severe than in Stage 3.

- Customers must implement the Stage 5 Drought Response Measures when any other emergency water supply or demand conditions exist that the LCRA General Manager or the LCRA Board determines constitute a water supply emergency.

B. Requirements Criteria for termination — LCRA cancels a declaration of Drought Worse than Drought of Record or other water supply emergency. LCRA Board sets criteria to exit Stage 4, or increase mandatory pro rata curtailment percentage if conditions worsen. Customers may stop implementing Stage 4 measures when LCRA announces that Stage 4 restrictions under this Plan are no longer required.

Upon lifting of exiting Stage 4, a less restrictive stage may become operative as
(5) **STAGE 5 - Emergency Water Conditions**

A. **Requirements for initiation** - Customers must implement the Stage 5 Drought Response Measures when any other emergency water supply or demand conditions exist that the LCRA General Manager or the LCRA Board determines constitute a water supply emergency.

B. **Requirements for termination** - Stage 5 of the Plan may be rescinded when LCRA announces that Stage 5 restrictions under this Plan are no longer required.

Upon lifting of Stage 5, a less restrictive stage may become operative.

8.0 **Drought Response Measures**

8.1 **Targets for Water-Use Reductions**

(1) **STAGE 1** - **Mild Water Shortage Conditions (Mandatory/Voluntary Measures)**

Achieve a 10-15% reduction in water use.

(2) **STAGE 2** - **Moderate Water Shortage Conditions (Mandatory Measures)**

Achieve a 10-20% reduction in water use.

(3) **STAGE 3** - **Severe Water Shortage Conditions (Mandatory Measures)**

Achieve a minimum 20% reduction in water use.

(4) **STAGE 4** - **Critical Water Shortage Conditions (Mandatory Measures)**

Achieve 30% reduction in water use. As determined by the LCRA Board.

(5) **STAGE 5** - **Emergency Water Shortage Conditions (Mandatory Measures)**

As determined by the LCRA Board.

8.2 **Required Measures**

(1) **STAGE 1 - Mild Water Shortage Conditions**

A. Actively promote drought-related issues and the need to conservation measures.
B. Continue to follow the permanent landscape watering schedule.

(2) **STAGE 2 - Moderate Water Shortage Conditions**

All Stage 1 required measures of Stages 1 are also in effect during Stage 2, with the following modifications and additions:

A. LCRA will keep customers informed about issues regarding current and projected water supply and demand conditions.

B. Irrigation of Landscaped Areas:

1. Continue to follow the permanent landscape watering schedule. Irrigation of landscaped areas with hose-end sprinklers or in-ground irrigation systems shall be limited to a no more than ONCE weekly watering schedule for no more than 10-15 hours. A variance may be requested for commercial landscapes and recreational areas (including public parks) to apply for a variance but must still develop a schedule where no part of the landscape is watered more than once per week. Where no part of the landscape is watered more than once per week.

   - Residential addresses ending in odd numbers: Saturdays
   - Residential addresses ending in even numbers: Sundays
   - Commercial/ HOA/ POA addresses: Fridays
   - November through February: No irrigation with in-ground irrigation systems allowed.

2. Outdoor watering hours will be limited to between 10 p.m. and 10-15 hours per day before 10 a.m. and after 7 p.m. on designated days. This requirement does not apply to irrigation of landscaped areas if it is by means of:
   i. a hand-held hose with a positive shut-off device; or
   ii. a faucet-filled bucket or watering can of five gallons or less.

3. New irrigated landscapes may be installed and re-vegetation seeding may be performed only pursuant to a variance granted by the LCRA General Manager or his or her designee for a period of no more than 30 days.

CB. Pools:

1. Draining and re-filling of residential swimming pools, hot tubs, and wading pools is allowed only onto pervious surfaces or
onto a surface where water will be transmitted directly to a pervious surface, and only if:

a. Draining excess water from pool due to rain in order to lower water to maintenance level;

b. Repairing, maintaining or replacing pool components that have become hazardous; or

c. Repair of a pool leak.

DC. Outside Water Features:

1. Operation of an outside water feature is allowed only if the system is recirculating recirculates through a closed-loop system.

2. Operation of outdoor misting systems at a commercial facility is allowed only between the hours of 4 p.m. and midnight.

2. Splash pad type fountains are allowed only if the recirculate the watering.

ED. Athletic Fields:

1. Watering should follow a no more than once twice-per-week schedule per irrigated area unless the athletic fields are used for organized sports practice, competition, or exhibition events when irrigation outside of the standard weekly schedule is necessary to protect the health and safety of the players, staff, or officials present for the athletic event.

2. All ornamental landscape areas around facilities with athletic fields shall follow general landscape irrigation restrictions.

EE. Events:

1. Events involving the use of water such as car washes, festivals, parties, water slides, and other activities involving the use of water are permitted, if the water being used drains to a recirculating device, or onto a pervious surface to prevent water waste.

EF. Restricted activities Activities:

1. Dust control.
   a. Use of water to control dust is limited to uses necessary to meet requirements of federal, state or local permits related to land development or for public health and safety.

2. Washing of structures, impervious surfaces and vehicles.
a. Use of water to wash any structure, impervious surface, or motor vehicle (such as a motorbike, boat, trailer, or airplane) is prohibited except on designated watering days between the hours of midnight and 10 a.m. and between 7 p.m. and midnight. Such activity, when allowed, shall be done with a hand-held bucket or a hand-held hose equipped with a positive shut-off nozzle.

(3) STAGE 3 - Severe Water Shortage Conditions

All requirements of Stages 1 and 2 are also in effect during Stage 3, with the following modifications and additions:

All measures required in Stages 1 and Stage 2 required measures including apply, plus and these additional required measures:

A. LCRA will increase efforts to keep customers informed about issues regarding current and projected water supply conditions, watering restrictions, and how they can reduce water use. In addition to measures implemented in the preceding stages of the plan, LCRA will explore additional emergency water supply options.

B. Irrigation of Landscaped Areas:

1. Irrigation of landscaped areas with hose-end sprinklers or in-ground irrigation systems shall be further limited to the following schedule:

   - Residential addresses ending in odd numbers: Saturdays
   - Residential addresses ending in even numbers: Sundays
   - Commercial-/ HOA/ POA addresses: Fridays
   - Outdoor watering hours will be limited to six hours a day between the hours of 4 a.m. and 10 a.m. on designated days.
   - November through February: No irrigation with in-ground irrigation systems allowed. Turn off your sprinkler system.

2. Outdoor watering hours for hand watering will be limited to 15 hours a day, before 10 a.m. and or after 7 p.m., on the same designated days that apply to watering with hose-end sprinklers or irrigation systems. The allowed methods of irrigation of hand watering landscaped areas are:

   - A hand-held hose with a positive shut-off device;
   - A faucet-filled bucket; or watering can of five gallons or less; or
   - A soaker hose; or
   - A Tree gator watering bags.

2. The Stage 3 landscape watering schedule does not apply to irrigation of landscaped areas if it is by means of:

   a. a hand-held hose with a positive shut-off device; or
   b. a faucet-filled bucket or watering can of five gallons or less; or
e. drip irrigation or soaker hoses used with a working on/off timer to water:
   (i) ____ vegetable gardens;
   (ii) ____ around a tree drip line; or
   (iii) ____ a foundation.

3. New irrigated landscapes representing a re-design of more than over 50% of the landscaped area may only be installed if:

   • a. ____ A 30-day watering schedule variance has been applied for and accepted (see section 9.2); (See section 9.2).
   • b. ____ Only drought-tolerant or native plants/turf or turf are installed;
   • c. ____ No more than 250% of the irrigated landscaped area is turf and the turf is drought-tolerant turf; and
   • d. ____ Irrigation of beds is accomplished by drip irrigation with an automatic timer.

CB. Pools:

1. ____ Installation of swimming pools is only allowed when equipped with an automatic pool cover.

2. ____ Public/community swimming pools should only be filled or replenished only as necessary to maintain safe levels of water quality for human contact and for maintenance and should be covered when not in use.

DC. Outside Water Features:

1. ____ Operation of outside water features is only allowed when such features are used for aeration necessary to sustain aquatic life.

1.2. ____ Operation of residential aesthetic or recreational devices, such as water slides, is prohibited.

ED. Ponds:

Ponds used for aesthetic, amenity and/or storm-water purposes may maintain water levels only to the extent necessary to preserve the integrity of the liner, and meet the LCRA Highland Lakes Watershed Ordinance or other applicable non-point source pollution regulations or for operating an irrigation system.

EF. Restricted Activities:

1. ____ Washing impervious surfaces.
Washing sidewalks, walkways, driveways, parking lots, street, tennis courts, and other impervious surfaces is prohibited except for immediate health and safety reasons.

2. **Vehicle Washing.** Use of water to wash any motor vehicle is prohibited except on designated watering days between the hours of 4 a.m. and 10 a.m. Such activity, when allowed, shall be done with a hand-held bucket or a hand-held hose equipped with a positive shut-off nozzle.

3. **Construction-related revegetation.** Revegetation of disturbed areas due to construction is allowed if required by local, state or federal regulations and requires a temporary watering variance must be granted by LCRA.

4. **Events.** Events involving the use of water such as car washes, festivals, parties, water slides, and other activities involving the use of water are prohibited.

(4) **STAGE 4 – Critical Water Shortage Conditions**

All previously required measures apply, plus including these additional required measures. All requirements of Stages 1 through 3 are also in effect during Stage 4, with the following modifications and additions:

A. **Irrigation of Landscaped Areas:**

1. The use of hose-end sprinklers and in-ground irrigation systems, including drip irrigation, are prohibited except drip irrigation.

2. Irrigation is allowed with hand-held hoses with a working on/off nozzle, bucket, or drip irrigation and only between the hours of 4 a.m. to 10 a.m. on the designated outdoor water use day listed in Stage 3. Bucket, point-source drip irrigation or soaker hoses irrigation only for watering foundations, trees, and planting beds vegetable gardens for 6 hours only between the hours of 7 a.m. and 10 a.m. or 7 p.m. and 10 p.m. one day per week on the designated outdoor water use days.

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LCRA Drought Contingency Plan for Domestic, Temporary, Landscape Irrigation and Recreational Use Contracts Page 12
3. New landscapes that include irrigated turf grass are prohibited.

4. A variance is required for irrigation of athletic fields if irrigation falls outside of the normal watering schedule. Fields should only be irrigated that are being actively field is used for organized sports practice, competition, or exhibition events and the irrigation is necessary to protect the health and safety of the players, staff, or official present for the athletic event.

B. Pools:

1. The filling or replenishing of water to single-family residential swimming pools is only allowed if the pool is covered with a pool cover when not in use.

2. Public/community swimming pools are allowed to fill or replenish water in order to maintain safe levels of water quality for human contact and should be covered when not in use.

C. Outside Water Features:

Use of water to operate outside water features, including fountains, outdoor misting systems, ornamental ponds and splash pads, is prohibited.

D. Ponds:

Only under a written request and approval by a municipal firm water customer or LCRA may water be used for wet water quality ponds to protect the liner and meet the LCRA Highland Lakes Watershed Ordinance or other applicable non-point source pollution regulations.

Use of water to operate outside water features, ornamental fountains, or ponds are only allowed when such features support aquatic life.

1. Outdoor misting systems and splash pads are prohibited.

ED. Washing of structures and vehicles:

Use of water to wash any structure or motor vehicle is prohibited except in instances with a direct public health and safety risk.
FE.

D. Additional Restrictions:

1. In the event LCRA Board requires additional drought response in this stage, as deemed necessary by the LCRA Board or the General Manager shall determine, additional restrictions, such as a prohibition on irrigation of landscaped areas, may be added during a prolonged drought worse than the drought of record.

(5) STAGE 5 – Emergency Water Shortage Conditions

All requirements of Stages 1 through 4 are also in effect during Stage 5, with the following modifications and additions:

A. Irrigation of landscaped areas by any means is prohibited.

B. Additional restrictions, as deemed necessary by the General Manager.

9.0 Enforcement

9.1 Enforcement Provisions

The following enforcement provisions shall apply to all customers subject to this Plan:

(1) No person shall knowingly or intentionally allow the use of water from LCRA in a manner contrary to any provision of this Plan, or in an amount in excess of that permitted by the drought response stage in effect at the time.

(2) Any person who violates this Plan shall be subject to the following surcharges and conditions of service:

A. Following the first documented violation, the violator shall be given a notice specifying the type of violation and the date and time it was observed. Surcharges and restrictions on service that may result from additional violations;

B. Following the second documented violation, the violator shall be sent by certified mail a notice of violation and shall be assessed a surcharge of $200;

C. Following the third and any subsequent documented violation, the violator shall be sent by certified mail a notice of violation and shall be assessed a surcharge of $700;

D. For repeat violations, LCRA may terminate the contract, refer the matter to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, TCEQ, seek injunctive relief,
and/or seek any other remedies available.

(3) Each day that one or more of the provisions in this Plan is violated shall constitute a separate violation. Watering schedule violations do not carry over from year to year for purposes of deeming a violation a second or subsequent violation. Tracking of multiple violations restarts at the beginning of the calendar year. Any person, including one classified as a water customer of LCRA, in apparent control of the property where a violation occurs or originates, shall have the right to show that he or she did not commit the violation.

9.2 Variances

(1) The LCRA General Manager or his or her designee may grant variances:

A. Temporary watering schedule variances are allowed for new landscapes that use drought-resistant landscaping or water-conserving natural turf as limited based upon the drought stage. Temporary watering schedule variances are also allowed for revegetation of disturbed areas due to construction, or if required by local, state or federal regulations.

The following guidelines apply to Temporary Watering Schedule Variances for new landscapes:

- A 30-day temporary watering schedule must be applied for and issued before the irrigation may begin.
- On days 1–one thru 10, automatic irrigation or hose-end sprinklers are allowed every day, subject to the allowable watering hours for the Stage drought response stage in effect.
- On days 11-20, automatic irrigation or hose-end sprinklers are allowed every other day subject to the allowable watering hours for the Stage drought response stage in effect.
- On days 21-30, automatic irrigation or hose-end sprinklers are allowed every third day subject to the allowable watering hours for the drought response Stage in effect.
- On day 31, the customer must return back to the watering schedule for the Stage drought response stage in effect.
- Hand watering is allowed anytime with a hose equipped with a positive shut-off nozzle, except as restricted under the watering hours or other restrictions for the Stage drought response stage in effect.

B. For commercial and large residential properties, where the mandatory outdoor watering schedule window is inadequate to cover large landscapes and subject to the requirements of the applicable drought response stage of this plan, a variance may be granted, provided that the variance does not increase the time allowed for watering each area but rather alters the schedule for watering; and
C. Allowing the use of alternative water sources (i.e., ground-water, reclaimed wastewater) that do not increase demand on LCRA-supplied water for outdoor use.

(2) The LCRA General Manager or his or her designee may grant in writing temporary variances for existing water uses otherwise prohibited under this Plan if it is determined that failure to do so would cause an emergency adversely affecting the public health, sanitation, or fire protection, and if one or more of the following conditions are met:

A. Compliance with this plan cannot be accomplished during the duration of the time the Plan is in effect; or

B. Alternative methods can be implemented that will achieve the same level of reduction in water use.

(3) Persons requesting a variance from the provisions of this Plan shall file a petition for variance to domesticwateruse@lcra.org any time the Plan or a particular drought response stage is in effect. The petition shall include the following:

- Name and address of the petitioner
- Purpose of water use
- Specific provision of the Plan from which the petitioner is requesting relief.
- Detailed statement as to how the specific provision of the plan adversely affects the petitioner or what damage or harm the petitioner or others will sustain if petitioner complies with this plan
- Description of the relief requested
- Period of time for which the variance is sought
- Alternative water use restrictions or other measures the petitioner is taking or proposes to take to meet the intent of this plan and the compliance date
- Other pertinent information

(4) Variances shall be subject to the following conditions, unless waived or modified by the LCRA General Manager or his or her designee:

A. Variances granted shall include a timetable for compliance.

B. Variances granted shall expire when the plan, or its requirements, is no longer in effect, unless the petitioner has failed to meet specified requirements.

(5) No variance shall be retroactive or otherwise excuse any violation occurring before the variance was issued.
Appendix A: LCRA Board Authorization of Drought Contingency Plan
Appendix B: Drought Response Enforcement Process under the Drought Contingency Plan for Domestic, Temporary, Landscape Irrigation and Recreational Use Contracts

LCRA will regularly monitor use by customers from water and/or land. LCRA will issue violations for non-compliance with the provisions of this plan as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First documented violation</th>
<th>Notice of violation issued. Customer notified of potential surcharges for subsequent violations</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Second documented violation</td>
<td>$200 surcharge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third and subsequent documented violation</td>
<td>$700 surcharge</td>
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</tbody>
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Appendix C: Mandatory Watering Schedules

Permanent mandatory watering schedule

Irrigate outdoors Outdoor watering using an in-ground irrigation system or hose-end sprinkler is allowed no more than Twice twice per week for up to 15 hours schedule and only during scheduled days and times as indicated below:

**Residential**
Odd number addresses: Wednesdays and Saturdays
Even number addresses: Thursdays and Sundays

**Commercial** (including large landscapes such as HOA common areas and public schools)
Tuesdays and Fridays

**Watering Hours:**
Midnight to 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. to midnight

1st Stage 2 drought related mandatory summer watering schedule

Irrigate outdoors Outdoor watering using an in-ground irrigation system or hose-end sprinkler is allowed no more than Once once per week for up to 15 hours and only during scheduled days and times as indicated below:

**Residential** - automatic irrigation systems
Odd number addresses: Saturdays
Even number addresses: Sundays

**Commercial** (including large landscapes such as HOA common areas and public schools)
Fridays

**Watering Hours:**
Automatic irrigation systems: Midnight to 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. to midnight

2nd Stage 3 drought related mandatory summer watering schedule

Irrigate outdoors Outdoor watering using an in-ground irrigation system or hose-end sprinkler is allowed no more than Once once per week for up to 6 hours only during scheduled days and times as indicated below:
Residential - automatic irrigation systems
Odd number addresses: Saturdays
Even number addresses: Sundays

Commercial -(including large landscapes such as HOA common areas and public schools)

Fridays

Watering Hours:
Automatic irrigation systems: 4 a.m. to 10 a.m.