



## Law Watering Restrictions: Frequently Asked Questions

### General Questions

#### **What is the Joint Water Commission?**

The Joint Water Commission (JWC) cities of Golden Valley, Crystal, and New Hope purchase water from the City of Minneapolis, which draws its water supply from the Mississippi River. After treatment and purification, the water is pumped to its customers throughout the metro area. Each city maintains its own distribution system and utility billing, meter reading and water sampling functions.

#### **How do the JWC cities determine when to implement lawn watering restrictions?**

Because of this year's abnormally dry to moderate drought in many parts of the state, the DNR has asked cities to implement water conservation measures and water use restrictions. Water restrictions in JWC cities follow those in Minneapolis and may affect lawn sprinkling, car washing and other outdoor water uses. Such restrictions help ensure adequate supplies of drinking water and water for hydrants in the event of a fire.

### Watering Restrictions: Specifics

#### **What are the specifics of the current lawn watering restrictions?**

Lawn watering is NOT allowed from noon to 6 p.m. on any day. On calendar days that are even numbers (examples: July 26 or Aug. 18), the even side of the street (examples: 1238 Oak St or 2574 Cedar Ave) CAN sprinkle lawns outside of the noon to 6 p.m. time window. On calendar days that are odd numbers (examples July 27 or Aug. 19), the odd side of the street (examples: 1247 Maple St or 2561 18th Ave) CAN sprinkle lawns outside of the noon to 6 p.m. time window.

#### **Why is watering prohibited between noon and 6 p.m.?**

The noon to 6 p.m. timeframe tends to be the hottest part of the day. Watering during cooler times of the day helps minimize evaporation, ensuring watering is most effective.

#### **Are there any exceptions to the restrictions?**

Yes. Bushes and flowers may be watered with a hand-held hose as needed. Vegetable gardens and new sod (first two-weeks from placement) may be watered on any day outside of the prohibited hours of noon to 6 p.m.

#### **Do restrictions apply to gardens/potted plants/hanging baskets?**

Under the current restrictions gardens, potted plants and hanging baskets may be watered as needed using a hand-held hose or watering can.

**Can newly-planted trees and sod be watered under current restrictions?**

Yes. Sod, within the first two-weeks of placement) may be watered on any day but not during the prohibited hours of noon to 6 p.m. Trees may be watered using a dripping hose, bucket or tree-watering bag as needed. Due to drought conditions it's recommended that planting of new sod or trees be delayed until drought conditions end.

**Can vehicles be washed under the water restrictions?**

Yes. Current restrictions do not affect the washing vehicles. However, it's encouraged that vehicles be washed outside of the noon to 6 p.m. window. It's also recommend those washing vehicles use a bucket to wash and run the hose only to rinse to conserve water use.

**Can my children play in the sprinkler?**

Children can play in the sprinkler, but the water from the sprinkler should be falling only on grass (and not a hard surface such as a sidewalk, driveway or street). It is preferred that the sprinklers are used for play in line with the even/odd watering day schedule. On calendar days that are even numbers (examples: July 26 or Aug. 18), the even side of the street (examples: 1238 Oak St or 2574 Cedar Ave) are requested days for sprinkler play. On calendar days that are odd numbers (examples July 27 or Aug. 19), the odd side of the street (examples: 1247 Maple St or 2561 18th Ave) could use sprinklers for play.

**How will I know when the watering restrictions are in effect/increase/expire?**

The JWC cities will communicate changes to watering restrictions via all communication vehicles including, but not limited to, social media and website posts, the media, signage and print.

**What are the JWC cities doing to enforce the restrictions?**

The cities are taking a number of approaches to educate residents, businesses and others about the watering restrictions, drought conditions and ways to reduce water usage while the restrictions in are in effect. These efforts range from social media and website posts, partnering with the media to disseminate information, making personal contacts and more. Should drought conditions continue for an extended period of time or get worse, additional education and enforcement measures may be implemented.

**What can I do if my neighbor is violating the watering restrictions?**

Those who are comfortable doing so my print an educational flier off the City's website or pick one up at City Hall to drop off to their neighbor. City staff may also drop off these educational fliers as they see individuals violating the restrictions.

**What if the drought continues or gets worse?**

The water restrictions will stay in place as long as the current drought conditions continue. More significant water use restrictions may be instituted if the current drought conditions get worse. Staff from JWC member cities are in regular communication with City of Minneapolis water production staff and other agencies monitoring the situation. There is no timeline for when the restrictions will end. Notification of a change in water use will be distributed via social media, city websites, city signage and media press releases.

**What are the JWC cities doing to reduce water usage?**

The cities are evaluating water usage on irrigated areas, recreational facilities and other locations and reducing or eliminating usage.

### **Doesn't the JWC have emergency wells?**

The JWC does have emergency wells that are designed to be used only when the water from Minneapolis is not available at all. The wells cannot be used at the same time as the JWC is drawing water from Minneapolis. Additionally, due to the nature of the wells being for emergency use only, they are designed to supply water to cover the baseline water consumption of the JWC cities.

## **Water Consumption**

### **How much water do JWC cities use each day?**

The three JWC Cities use around 5 million gallons of water each day October through March. This is considered the baseline consumption as irrigation, outdoor pools, and other seasonal water consumers are not in use.

### **Does water use increase in the summer?**

Water demands in the summer increase dramatically (between 6 and 9 million gallons per day on average) when residences and businesses sprinkle their lawns and other seasonal water consumption is in use.

### **Why is there a difference in water usage?**

Water demands in the summer increase dramatically (between 6 and 9 million gallons per day on average) when residences and businesses sprinkle their lawns and other seasonal water consumption (washing cars at non-commercial facilities, water use for yard recreation, power washing decks, etc.) is in use.

### **How many gallons of water can the JWC Cities store between the reservoirs and water towers?**

The JWC has the capacity to store just over 30 million gallons of water.

## **Additional Information**

### **Where can I go to learn more about the current drought conditions?**

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has a drought index available online: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/climate/drought/index.html>

### **Where can I go to learn more about the impact on my grass from the drought?**

The University of Minnesota Extension has information on the impact of droughts on lawns <https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden-news/allow-some-browning-lawns- conserve-water>

### **Where can I go to learn more about weather extremes?**

Please visit the University of Minnesota Extension website on extreme weather resources <https://extension.umn.edu/news/extreme-weather-resources>

### **Where can I go to learn more about resources for agriculture during a drought?**

Minnesota Department of Agriculture has a webpage dedicated to this <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/drought-resources>

### **Where can I get weather information?**

The National Weather Service office in Chanhassen a variety of forecast information available: <https://www.weather.gov/mpx/>