

“Drought Watch” For Southeastern Massachusetts

New Bedford to Encourage Water Conservation Practices

In light of the state Executive Office of Energy and Environment’s recent decision to upgrade the drought condition for Southeastern Massachusetts from “Drought Advisory” to “Drought Watch,” the City of New Bedford is taking steps to educate residents about ways they can help conserve water.

For areas under a “Drought Watch” (like New Bedford), the adoption of simple practices can help to significantly reduce outdoor water use. For example, outdoor watering is best done with a “handheld” hose or a watering can, rather than automatic sprinklers, after 5pm or before 9am (to avoid evaporative losses); and filling swimming pools, washing cars, and washing buildings, is discouraged.

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor’s most recent assessment data, 92% of Massachusetts is presently experiencing some level of drought conditions with 17% of the state experiencing extreme drought conditions. A “Drought Watch” is declared by the state when conditions include “extremely low groundwater and stream flow levels resulting from prolonged periods of precipitation deficit, including a lack of snowfall in the winter months.”

New Bedford residents are encouraged to review the following water conservation tips provided by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Environmental Affairs:

WATER CONSERVATION TIPS

OUTDOOR WATER USE

1. If you are in a region in Drought Watch (Moderate to Severe

Drought Conditions): Limit watering to hand-held only or drip irrigation outside the hours of 9am – 5pm to avoid evaporative losses. To check your drought region and status go to: www.mass.gov/dcr/drought. See DCR and DEP web pages for more outdoor water saving tips.

2. Cover swimming pools when not in use to prevent evaporative losses.

3. Sweep driveways, walks, patios, and other outdoor areas with a broom rather than hosing them off. If water is necessary, use a water-conserving pressurized cleaning device . A water-conserving pressurized cleaning device is one that either (a) discharges water at a minimum of 1,000 pounds per square inch (psi), or (b) is rated at using less than three gallons of water per minute.

4. Where possible wash vehicles using a bucket and sponge, employing a hose with a shut-off nozzle for rinse only, or, if available, use a commercial car wash that recycles water (most do).

INDOOR WATER USE

- Take Shorter Showers: 5 minutes or less.
- Wash only Full loads of laundry and dishes.
- Turn off the tap when brushing teeth or shaving.
- Fix Leaks in the Building. Dripping faucets and leaking toilets can add up to hundreds of gallons of water lost per week.
- Avoid using the garbage disposal: create a kitchen compost instead.