

City of Cloverdale Stage 2 Water Emergency Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- 1. What is Stage 2 Mandatory Community Cooperation Water Conservation Effort?** This stage is mandatory, however, the enforcement will only be applied to those found to be blatantly wasting water. For the majority of water customers, the City is expecting them to self-monitor their water use and to continue doing the best they can to save water. Fines and/or shut-off of services will only happen for blatant water wasters who will be notified by phone or door hanger of any infraction; upon continued waste they will be notified by letter warning of possible shut-off of services.
- 2. The City's approach to reducing water use by requiring 25% reduction seems unfair. Doesn't this approach penalize those of us that have already been conserving?** The Stage 2 Emergency is mandatory but unmonitored. The code enforcement procedures will only be applied to those customers that blatantly waste water. Therefore, for customers already conserving, the City asks that you continue to save water and look for additional ways to reduce water use further. If the target savings are not achieved, the City may enact Stage 3 Mandatory Reductions which IS monitored and would allocate 65 gallons per person per day to each property. This method is equitable so long as there is an accurate count of the number of people per house. However, this method is extremely time-consuming to administer - it requires daily or weekly monitoring of each customer's water use and enforcement on a larger number of customers.
- 3. How do I know if I am using 25% less water?** The 25% reduction is measured against the same month's water use from year 2013. A thirteenth month has been added to your water bill so this comparison can be made.
- 4. What if I don't have usage from last year because I've lived in the property a short time?** We are asking everyone to conserve. Take a look at several months of your usage, take the average and reduce that by 25%.
- 5. With a Stage 2 Emergency will I be allowed to water my lawn?** The City strongly encourages all customers to turn off their irrigation timers at this time. Although technically allowed in the municipal code, those irrigating must provide the City with evidence they are following a water budget with applied water not exceeding 80% of the turf's need with the actual weather conditions. Customers should be prepared to let their lawns brown this summer and, to preserve the turf, avoid walking on the grass which would damage or kill the grass. If necessary, the City Council may consider passing a resolution to ban turf irrigation city-wide this summer. There is not sufficient water to both irrigate and meet the needs of customer's indoor water use and to keep businesses viable. By stopping all irrigation this summer, the City has improved its chances of maintaining water in its storage tanks and meeting the reduced water use.
- 6. If it rains in February and March, will customers still need to reduce water use?** The Water Agency has stated we need 12 inches of rain between February 1st and May 1st to "catch up" to one of the worst droughts in history - 1977. With the passing of each dry day, the chances of getting 12 or more inches of rain are getting more unlikely. The latest storm dropped nearly 8 inches of rain in the northern Russian River watershed. However, as of Tuesday 2/11, the reservoir level has stabilized after only increasing by 3,703 acre-feet rising to 28,228 acre-feet. This is an increase from 36.1% to 41.6% of storage capacity and we would need 10 more similar storms to reach full water supply capacity of 68,000 acre-feet. The City draws its water from underground and the lake is representative of the thirsty condition of the natural underground flow of water as it seeps down into the ground after a storm. An acre-foot of water is enough water to cover an acre of land with one foot deep and is equivalent to 325,828 gallons which is roughly the same amount used for an entire year by three households.
- 7. Why hasn't the City done more to prevent this shortage from happening?** 2013 was the driest year in over 400 years and the entire California is in a water shortage crisis. Despite a new city well being installed in August 2013 and two new wells to be brought on-line in July 2014, the City is projecting its supply will be reduced in the summer months for 2014. The City wells are not projected to "dry up" because they draw deep down from the underflow of the Russian River.
- 8. Has the City looked into using recycled water for irrigation?** The City has extensively studied upgrading its waste-water treatment plant. Installing dual system piping and constructing large reservoirs to hold recycled water is estimated to cost over sixty million dollars (\$60,000,000.00), which is beyond the City's means at this time.