



PRESS RELEASE
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Benicia Adopts Emergency Ordinance Limiting Landscape Watering

Goal is to further encourage water reductions during serious drought

BENICIA – July 2, 2014

The Benicia City Council last night adopted emergency outdoor watering restrictions that limit landscape irrigation to three days per week on specific days and times.

The emergency ordinance is designed to further encourage water reductions in light of the serious drought plaguing California and its impacts on Benicia's water supplies. Benicia typically gets 85 percent of its water from the State Water Project, and deliveries will be limited this year, according to state officials.

Effectively immediately through October 15, 2014, the emergency ordinance stipulates that:

- Residents with addresses ending in an odd number (1, 3, 5, 7 or 9) can only water on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.
- Residents with addresses ending in an even number (0, 2, 4, 6 or 8) can only water Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.
- Residents are allowed to water on their designated day only, between the hours of 7 p.m. and 8 a.m.

From October 16, 2014 to March 31, 2015, landscape watering will be limited to one day per week—on Saturdays or Sundays only.

The restrictions apply to both residential and commercial customers and will remain in effect until the City Council declares an end to the water shortage emergency.

"Residents can make a big dent in their household water use by limiting landscape watering, which is where most water use--and water waste--occurs," said David Wenslawski, Water Quality Technician. At a typical home, more than 50 percent of the water use goes to watering on lawns and outdoor landscaping, and about 30 percent of that is lost due to overwatering and evaporation from wind and sun.

By taking immediate action to limit landscape watering, the City can maximize the potential for savings during peak temperature and water use months, which can help achieve the 20 percent voluntary reduction target set by city council members in February," said Wenslawski.

City of Benicia residents reduced their water use by nearly 10 percent since March compared to the same timeframe in 2012, the city's baseline for measurement, according to an analysis by the Benicia Public Works Department. The City is using 2012 as the baseline year because it closely matches a five-year average for water use.

"The figures show that Benicia residents clearly have embraced the challenge to use less water during this serious drought, and they deserve to be commended," said Wenslawski. "However, it's essential for everyone to continue doing their part to maintain this downward trend in order to ensure that Benicia has adequate water supplies as the drought continues."

With the emergency ordinance's adoption, the City will begin notifying residents about restrictions through direct mail, newspaper advertising and information posted to the City's water conservation Web page found at BeniciaSavesWater.org.

Residents will have a one-month grace period to follow the new watering schedule before the City begins enforcing the new ordinance. Customers will receive a written notice for the first violation. Fines will be issued for further violations--a second offence is \$50, a third is \$100, and a fourth and every subsequent offense is \$250.

Free services and rebates are available to help residential and business customers use less water. More information plus water wise tips are available at BeniciaSavesWater.org or by contacting the Water Conservation Team at (707) 746-4380 or water@ci.benicia.ca.us

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