

Drought Brings Variety Of Water Preservation Strategies To The West

(AP) Cities across the West have mandated water restrictions or asked residents to voluntarily cut back on water use to avoid shortages. Some restrictions take effect automatically each year, while others depend on the forecast and the amount of precipitation the region has received. Much of the West is in some stage of drought, ranging from abnormal to exceptional. Here's a look at some of the water-saving measures in effect across the region:

ARIZONA:

The southeastern Arizona city of Safford has been under strict water restrictions since February 2013, with the aim of reducing usage by 30 percent. Residents cannot refill swimming pools or spas, plant new grass or install sod. Watering outdoors is limited to twice weekly. Water at restaurants comes upon request only. Williams, a gateway city to the Grand Canyon, imposed its most severe water restrictions earlier this year. They prohibit outdoor watering and washing cars with potable water. The city also stopped issuing building permits for new development because water is scarce. The town of Payson has set a goal for each resident to use no more than 89 gallons of water per day.

CALIFORNIA:

In January, Governor Jerry Brown declared a drought emergency. In Sacramento, residents are required to use 20 percent less water, with officials beefing up conservation efforts and limiting outdoor watering, according to the Association of California Water Agencies. Residents of Visalia in the Central Valley are on a schedule for watering outdoors and washing their cars. In Northern California, Willits residents are limited to 150 gallons of water per day as leaders scramble to find money for water. The Los Angeles County Water District asks customers to use 20 percent less water by turning off the faucet while shaving or brushing their teeth, along with taking shorter showers and using a broom rather than a hose to clean their patios and sidewalks.

NEW MEXICO:

Santa Fe residents are limited to three days a week in which they can water outdoors during certain hours, and once per month for washing each vehicle at home. Permits are required to install new irrigation systems. Violators can be fined up to \$200. Restrictions in Carlsbad and other communities prevent residents from watering their lawns and require that restaurants provide customers with glasses of water upon request only.

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NEVADA:

Southern Nevada residents can be fined or issued a citation if their sprinkler irrigation systems run outside assigned days. No new turf is allowed in front yards in Las Vegas, and the size of backyard lawns is limited. The Southern Nevada Water Authority pays residents \$1.50 per square foot to remove their grass. Golf courses are subject to water budgets. In Reno, lawn watering is barred on Mondays. Businesses and residents are on a schedule during the rest of the week for outdoor watering. The Truckee Meadows Water Authority estimates water use increases up to tenfold during the summer. The authority says assigned days for outdoor watering help level off peak days.

TEXAS:

The list of public utilities limiting water use to avoid shortages has grown to include hundreds of communities. In far western Texas, El Paso is reusing treated wastewater, and the city has invested in a major desalination plant for turning salty, unusable groundwater into a drinking-water source. Outdoor watering is prohibited on Mondays.

UTAH:

Limits on outdoor watering during the hottest times of the day have been in place for several years says Karry Rathje, spokeswoman for Washington County Water Conservancy District in southern Utah. Farmers and ranchers in southern Utah will need to scale back summertime water use, said Sterling Brown of the Utah Farm Bureau Federation. It's too early to say if formal restrictions will be put in place, he said. Northern Utah's water supply is plentiful thanks to a flurry of late-spring snow and rain.

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