



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD

Making progress possible. Together.

LEVEL 3 WATER RESTRICTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CITY OF CAPE TOWN
WATER & SANITATION

2016



green drop
CERTIFICATION

waste water service
REGULATION



blue drop
CERTIFIED

Excellent drinking water quality
MANAGEMENT

These questions and answers have been prepared to help you comply with the Cape Town level 3 water restrictions.

1. What are the main differences between level 2 and level 3 water restrictions?

Key new water restrictions include:

- Watering only allowed with a bucket or watering can. No use of hosepipes or irrigation systems allowed.
 - Cars and boats to be washed from buckets.
 - Swimming pools to be fitted with a pool cover.
 - No portable play pools are to be used.
-

2. Do the level 2 water times still apply– avoid heat of the day?

No. Watering times are not restricted, however, residents are urged to limit their watering to the mornings and evenings when it is cooler and to avoid watering in windy periods.

3. Can I use a hosepipe to top-up my swimming pool?

Yes. The restriction on hosepipe use only applies to irrigation/watering.

4. Must koi ponds and water features be fitted with a cover?

Fish ponds and water features are not required to be covered. However, you are encouraged not to use water features until the water restrictions have been lifted.

5. I understand why water tariffs increase. But why do sanitation tariffs also increase?

Water tariffs increase (especially for large water users) to encourage water saving.

Sanitation tariffs increase for cost recovery reasons. Sanitation charges are based on water consumption as most water used ultimately ends up in the sewers. Due to the restrictions we expect to sell less water. We thus need to increase sanitation tariffs to compensate as many sanitation costs, such as staff and maintenance costs, are fixed and do not decrease with the expected lower sewage volumes.

6. Will I be penalized or punished with some additional penalty fee for not using less water than what I am currently using?

There are no penalties for consumers who don't make additional water savings. However, the price of water will be increasing – especially for large domestic consumers. This means that you will pay more for the same amount of water used. This is necessary in order to encourage water savings. Due to the city's increasing block tariff for domestic consumers, this will have very little effect on small consumers and water efficient households. On the other hand, large domestic consumers will pay a significantly higher marginal price for water.

For an average customer the tariffs should be cost neutral. In other words if an average customer reduce consumption by 20%, their bill should remain at a similar rand value.

7. I have reported a water leak. Why hasn't anyone come to fix it?

The city services a pipe network of close to 11 000 km (the equivalent distance from here to Australia), to which 650 000 properties are connected. Every year approximately 3000 burst water mains and over 30 000 leaking water connections are repaired. We have a limited number of repair teams available and pipe bursts and large leaks are prioritized over smaller leaks. Most pipe bursts are repaired within one hour, however, smaller leaks may take some time to be attended to.

8. Do boreholes need to be registered? Do you pay for registration and the borehole sign?

Wellpoints and boreholes must be registered.

The registration is free and signage is provided free on registration. There is no charge for the consumption of borehole or wellpoint water. Wellpoints and boreholes must be registered. See our website for more information.

9. I have applied to register my borehole/ wellpoint, but haven't received my official, free display sign from the City. Will I be fined?

Proof of your application for registration will be emailed to you. This can be printed and kept until you receive your official (free) display sign as required by the latest water restrictions. See our website for information on how to register.

10. Do I need to apply for permission in order to sink a new borehole or wellpoint and will I be charged for using this water?

You or your contractor will need to apply. See our website for information on how to apply. Once installed, the borehole or wellpoint must be registered. There is no charge for using borehole or wellpoint water.

11. Do I need a display sign if I am using bath water to water my lawn?

Yes, when using greywater you need to put up a sign stating that you are using non-potable water for irrigation clearly visible from a public thoroughfare. See our website for more details.

12. Can I use bath water to water my garden at any time or only on watering days?

You can use bath water to water your garden any time as bath water cannot be stored for a period of time without causing a health nuisance. A visible signage saying you are using non-potable water for watering your garden must be displayed. This must be clearly visible from a public thoroughfare. See our website for more information.

13. When am I allowed to wash my car?

There are no restrictions on when you may wash your car. However, a hosepipe cannot be used – only a bucket.

14. I want to clean my roof using a high-pressure hose, but I am not using a contractor. Do I need an exemption and will I get it?

You need to apply for an exemption. Conditional approval may be granted. Please note that the exemption will be for a defined period that will be determined by the Director: Water and Sanitation. See our website for how to [apply for exemption from water restrictions](#).

15. Can historical / museum gardens be exempt from the water restrictions?

Yes. Exemptions are possible to various types of customers. See our website for how to [apply for exemption from water restrictions](#).

16. What is normal consumption and how much water should I be using? How do I know how much water I am using?

Most households use between 6 and 20 kl a month (between 200 and 600 litres per day). However, houses with large gardens and swimming pools generally use much more water. More than 30 kl per month (1000 litres per day) can be considered as relatively high consumption. Learn more about water consumption in Cape Town on page 37 of [The Water Cycle booklet](#).

Your monthly consumption is printed on your municipal account in kilolitres (kl). One kilolitre is a 1000 litres. Your meter reading and consumption can also be monitored via e-Services. Please note that consumption is dependent on the interval between meter readings. An estimate is generated if your meter was not read in that month. Alternatively, you can read your own meter and keep track of your consumption.

Remember that your water and sanitation bill depends on your consumption. The price of water increases the more you use. This is in order to encourage water saving. Click [here](#) for information on tariffs.

17. How effective were previous water restrictions? How did consumption patterns change in that period of restrictions?

The water restrictions imposed in 2005 resulted in 15.5% savings - most of which was sustained. This indicates that a large proportion of consumers changed their habits permanently and installed alternatives, such as boreholes, greywater irrigation systems, and in some cases laid paving to minimize irrigation requirements.

However, the level 2 water restrictions imposed on 1 January 2016 achieve less than 10% savings.

18. What penalties are proposed this time?

Spot fines of up to R1 500 may be issued by the City of Cape Town in terms of the Water Bylaw. Repeat offenders could be summonsed to appear in court and on conviction be liable for a fine of up to R10 000, or imprisonment of up to 5 years, or both.

19. Experience and common sense show us that rich people, who are also the heaviest water users, will be able to afford the punitive water tariffs and therefore will have no incentive to save water. Poor people, on the other hand, will not be able to afford them, so are likely to bear the brunt of the higher prices or having to cope with less water. What steps are being taken to address this?

The free water allocation remains free and is set at 6 kilolitres per domestic household. The lower steps of the tariff structure have low increases, while the higher steps are subjected to higher percentage increases, thus assisting the poor and those who save water. Informal settlement residents receive all water for free.

20. A water consumption reduction of 30% implies a reduction of 30% in the City's income from water and sewerage. How will this affect the council's operations?

The tariff is designed to be revenue-neutral when applied to the current consumption levels. The proposed increases are designed to recover the loss in income/revenue due to the reduction in billed consumption, so no operational consequences /effects are expected.

21. If there's a significant decrease in the flow of water through the city's sewerage system, will this affect its operation? Are there any health risks associated with this?

Most of the water saving comes from a reduction in irrigation or other "luxury" uses like swimming pools. It is therefore not expected that there will be any serious effect on the sewerage system. This will however be monitored.

22. How will you make allowances for large households? It would be unreasonable to expect someone living alone to be able to save as much water as a family of six living in the house next door.

While there is no simple or inexpensive way to monitor the number of people in a household for every connection, the free water does allow for a free basic allocation of 25 litres per day for a household of up to 8 people. This is the basis for the 6 kilolitres for each household. Each and every one of us can save water, the volume/extent will differ from person to person, but whatever the volume, it makes a difference and is well appreciated.

23. Will restrictions affect municipal swimming pools?

Municipal and public swimming pools should be fitted with a pool cover where practically possible. No automatic top-up systems are allowed.

24. Will restrictions affect spray parks?

No. Spray parks are allowed to operate but must be strictly managed to minimise water wastage.

City of Cape Town spray parks are designed with water efficiency in mind and use less water than a swimming pool.

25. What special arrangements (if any) are being made to ensure the maintenance of the City's golf courses? Have you quantified the amount of water used to water golf courses?

Almost all golf courses in the City are irrigated using recycled (treated effluent) water from wastewater treatment plants, boreholes or other resources.

26. Will you continue to use municipal trucks to spray road surfaces during the period of restrictions? If so, why? And how much water do they consume?

Municipal street-cleaning generally uses non-potable water.

27. What steps is the Council, as a water consumer itself, taking to ensure it reduces its usage?

The City continuously identifies its large water use points and engages with the relevant directorates to determine areas of water saving, for example the retro-fitting program which entails the removal of automatic flushing urinals in its buildings. All council directorates are also expected and bound to comply with the restrictions in their water-related activities.

28. What steps are you expecting provincial consumers – such as schools and hospitals – to take to reduce consumption?

The water restriction notice applies to all users. Council has embarked on a partnership with schools to help reduce consumption through its awareness and education programme on water saving and the training of school caretakers to fix leaks. Other water saving tips for [businesses and organisations](#) are available on the City's website.

29. Can a stepped penalty be introduced, so that those who consume less than 25kl per month, for example, are not required to reduce their usage at all?

This is the basic principle applied in the proposed tariff increase, those using less water pay less, and those using more water pay more.

30. How will you police restrictions?

Water Inspectors will monitor compliance with the restriction measures, over and above the Water Bylaw in its entirety and issue spot fines where applicable. The public are normally our most vigilant enforcers and they may report offenders on 0860 103 089 or by email: waterTOC@capetown.gov.za.

31. How are homeowners, who use borehole water for their gardens, expected to respond to the water restrictions?

The restriction notice indicates that where other sources of water (i.e. not drinking water from municipal supply) are used, a notice to this effect must be erected in a position clearly visible from a public thoroughfare. In addition, when watering gardens, parks, open spaces, etc. with alternative water resources (e.g. rain water harvesting, grey water re-use, treated effluent water, wellpoints and boreholes) you are encouraged to do so only before 09:00 or after 16:00 on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

32. Sectional title owners who save water will still be penalized if other owners in their block continue to be wasteful or profligate. How will you address this?

The planned media campaign is aimed at ensuring that everyone co-operates and contributes to the targeted savings in water consumptions. It is therefore hoped that fellow water saving residents will bring the appropriate pressure to bear on those who may not be so inclined.

33. Who are the 10 biggest water consumers in the City of Cape Town?

Consumption figures for individual consumers are considered confidential and cannot be released to the public. However, the largest users in the city include developments such as large shopping centres and office blocks, universities, institutions and certain industries.

Large users (.10 000 kL/annum) are required to conduct annual water audits (in line with schedule of the Water by-law, 2010) and systems are in place to monitor their consumption.

Can owners of boats rinse and flush their motors after fishing?

Flushing of motors is permitted within the ambit of the restriction measures.

34. Can someone who uses borehole water to water grass and plants (therefore saving water) use their hosepipe to wash their car in the allocated times?

It is recommended to rather use a bucket, but if a hosepipe is used, it must be fitted with an automatic self-closing device.

35. Are notices in three languages being provided at e.g. cash offices, libraries, clinics etc?

Notices will be displayed at all City buildings and other public spaces.

36. Are car valet services compelled to use trigger nozzles on hoses?

Yes

37. Can I fill and top up my swimming pool?

Yes, but all private swimming pools must be fitted with a pool cover. Public pools should be fitted with a pool cover where practically possible.

38. Who do you fine if Council is contravening the water restrictions?

This matter will be dealt with in accordance with City procedures.

39. Is it illegal to wash down the forecourt of a petrol station?

Hosing down is not allowed. If washing must be done, a bucket must be used.

40. If a person has a visible leak on their property and is not in a position to fix it, what can be done? Does Council have a system in place whereby a plumber will be sent to repair the leak and bill the tenant?

No, it is the owner's responsibility to employ the services of a registered plumbing contractor to attend to the problem, at the owner's cost.

41. How can I report an irrigation violation?

By calling 0860 103089, or sms 31373, or email WaterTOC@capetown.gov.za.

42. Are there watering restrictions for vegetable gardens?

Agricultural crops are considered gardens and therefore may only be irrigated using a bucket or watering container.

43. I live on agricultural land, do watering restrictions apply to me?

The water restriction bylaw applies to all homes and businesses located within the City of Cape Town's jurisdiction. The details vary depending on type of consumer. See our website for how to [apply for exemption from water restrictions](#).

44. I have hired a company to power wash my driveway, is this allowed under the current watering restrictions?

No, power washing driveways with drinking water is not allowed, unless the business owner has obtained an exemption.

45. I've noticed my neighbour is watering using an irrigation system / hosepipe. What should I do?

You could speak with your neighbour to see if they are aware of the watering restrictions. If they aren't aware, direct them to the City's website. If you have concerns please, contact the customer line on 0860 103089 / sms 31373 or send an email to WaterTOC@capetown.gov.za.

46. Do you have any water saving tips?

Yes. See our water saving tips for [homes](#) and [businesses and organisations](#) on our website.

47. Can I use a drip system or soaker hose?

No. Only watering with a bucket or watering container is allowed.

48. My charity was planning a fund-raising carwash. Can we still proceed?

Buckets or waterless cleaning products must be used. The use of hosepipes is prohibited.

49. Why is irrigation being limited?

It is the one of the largest categories of water use in the City of Cape Town.

50. How, where and what is the procedure that should be followed to apply for an exemption should I be entitled/request for one?

See our website for how to [apply for exemption from water restrictions](#).

51. I work in the poorer areas of the City and I regularly see large volumes of water running to waste in these areas where the occupants cannot afford to repair the leaks. What has the City done and what are they doing about this?

The City has a project in place in terms of its policies, to repair leaks at indigent properties and install a water management device in order to control the water usage to prevent further leaks and water wastage.

52. Why must I save water when I see people in informal settlements wasting water which they don't pay for?

It is important that all residents help save water. The City is sensitising residents, from all areas, about the need to use water sparingly. Water consumption from all areas (including informal settlements) is being monitored.

Water consumption per person in informal settlements is generally much lower than that of formal residential areas, where there is a greater demand for irrigation. Overall, only 5% of Cape Town's water is consumed in informal areas. See page 37 of [The Water Cycle booklet](#) for a breakdown of water consumption per user type.

All domestic users receive free basic services. Formal customers receive 6000 litre per month free of charge, while informal settlement residents receive free water via communal taps.

53. What is the City doing about the homeless people using the City's fire hydrants to wash vehicles?

Using fire hydrants, by anyone, for anything other than their intended purpose without permission is an illegal act (refer to section 55 of the Water Bylaw) so is water wastage (refer to section 37 of the Water by-law) and such contraventions will be dealt with in accordance with existing legal processes in terms of section 64 of the Water Bylaw.

54. Can my kids use the sprinkler in the backyard?

No. The use of sprinklers is not allowed. We would encourage you to check out one of our water parks.

55. Can I pull my vehicle along the side of a river and wash it with bucket water on the river bank? If not, then why not?

No, the cumulative impact would threaten the ecological life of the system. Rivers are considered part of a stormwater system, so abstraction without permission and disturbance of the river banks are acts in direct violation of section 4 (g) and (h) of the Stormwater Management By-law.

56. May paved areas be hosed down with municipal tap water?

No. Paved areas can only be hosed down with non-potable water.

57. I want to hire a water slide. Do I need an exemption or does the person hiring it out to me need one?

The business owner must obtain an exemption.