

Greenwich's Water Supply: Our Drought Response Plan

September 2015

Introduction

In July 1995, a Drought Response Plan (DRP) was adopted by the Connecticut and New York-American Water Companies; the Towns of Greenwich and Darien in Connecticut; and the Town and City of Rye and villages of Rye Brook and Port Chester in New York. It is a result of long term planning for water supply needs. Aquarion Water Company is now the local supplier and works with the Town on the plan.

What is a Drought Response Plan?

A drought response plan is designed to provide uniform procedures to be implemented during drought conditions and/or excessive demand to reduce water consumption. It is a systematic way to bring together water company and local officials to respond to effectively to water shortages.

How does the plan work?

The DRP is a four-stage plan following guidelines established by both the Connecticut Department of Public Health and Westchester County Health Department. The first stage, Drought Advisory, promotes voluntary water conservation and public outreach/education to reduce water consumption. The Water Supply Advisory has a goal of 10% reduction in water use.

The next three stages, Drought Watch, Drought Warning, and Drought Emergency, place mandatory restrictions on water use. The goal is to reduce consumption by 15%, 20%, and 25% respectively as we move through the stages. The phases have increasingly stringent restrictions on water use. During a Drought Emergency all non-essential use of water is prohibited.

In Greenwich, the Board of Selectmen and the Board of Health have authority to enact mandatory water restrictions during times of water shortages. They do this under advisement from the Water Supply Team that includes the Conservation Director - lead, Director of Health, Fire Chief, Emergency Management Director, First Selectman, and Town Administrator; and the water company.

What if I have a well instead of being part of the public water utility?

During times of drought, Greenwich officials closely monitor information for both public and private supplies. Our Conservation Director and Fire Chief make recommendations to the First Selectman and Director of Health on both surface and groundwater sources. Town regulations allow for restrictions to be placed on all consumers, including those served by private wells.

What triggers the announcement of a Drought Advisory?

A Water Supply Advisory is announced when the reservoir storage falls below a certain level for that time of year and when long-range weather forecasts are not favorable and/or when conditions are abnormally dry impacting stream and groundwater levels. Excessively high consumption rates may also trigger an advisory. This stage encourages voluntary conservation and creates public awareness. It is also the time when public officials from each affected town and water company officials meet to review the DRP and prepare for additional action.

What types of mandatory restrictions are in the plan?

Mandatory restrictions take effect once a Drought Watch is declared. Restrictions become more stringent if the drought continues and we move through the different phases in the plan.

Drought Watch - is designed to reduce water usage by 15%. Mandatory restrictions may include serving water to restaurant patrons only upon request, prohibiting the use of hoses for street, driveway, sidewalk and/or automobile washing, prohibition of watering golf course roughs, and the use of water for power washing. All businesses are required to have a written water conservation plan on the premises with a goal of 15% reduction in water use.

Drought Warning - imposes additional restrictions to reduce water usage by 20% including prohibiting the filling of residential swimming pools, and additional restrictions on watering lawns and landscaping. Business water conservation plans increases to 20%.



Drought Emergency - imposes additional restrictions to reduce water usage by 25% including the prohibition of use of water for residential landscaping. Business water conservation plans increases to 25%.

The exact nature of the mandatory restrictions will be determined by the Board of Selectmen and/or the Board of Health based on recommendations from the Conservation Director, Director of Health, the Fire Chief, Emergency Management Director, and the water company.

How do I get more information on our water supply and/or the Drought Management Plan?

Officials will use the local media for updates on the water supply situation and what stage of the DRP we are in. We will also update the Towns website.

For additional information specific to Greenwich, you can contact any of the following staff:

Denise Savageau, Conservation Director - 622-6461 - team leader

Caroline Baisley, Director of Health 622-7836

Peter Siecienski, Fire Chief - 622-3950

Dan Warzoha, Emergency Management Director - 622-2222

