

Drought Watch Issued by the NYSDEC

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos issued a drought watch on July 21st for the entire state of New York following consultation with the State Drought Management Task Force and Federal partner agencies.

A watch is the first of four levels of state drought advisories ("watch," "warning," "emergency" and "disaster"). **There are no statewide mandatory water use restrictions in place under a drought watch. However, local public water suppliers may require such measures depending upon local needs and conditions.** The last drought watch in New York State was issued in 2002.

Observed precipitation has been less than normal with shortfalls of 4 to 8 inches common over the last 90 days. The dry weather dates back to the October 1st start of the "water year" and is beginning to significantly affect other water metrics. Stream flows and groundwater levels are well below normal throughout much of the state. Groundwater levels were seasonally worse in June compared to May and they are not expected to improve in the immediate future due to the existing precipitation deficit. For more [detailed drought information](#), please visit DEC's website.

The following are some conservation tips that homeowners can take to voluntarily reduce their water usage:

- Fix dripping and leaking faucets and toilets. *A faucet leaking 30 drops per minute wastes 54 gallons a month.*
- Raise your lawn mower cutting height. Longer grass needs less water.
- If your community allows watering, water lawns and gardens on alternate mornings instead of every day. *Less frequent watering will develop grass with deeper roots, and early morning watering minimizes evaporation.*
- When using automatic lawn watering systems, override the system in wet weather or use a rain gauge to control when and how much water to use. *A fixed watering schedule wastes water. Irrigate only when needed.*
- Sweep sidewalks and steps rather than hosing them. *Eliminating a weekly 5-minute pavement hose-down could save between 625 and 2500 gallons of water per year depending on the flow rate.*

For [more water saving tips](#), visit DEC's website.

NYSDOH Drought Advice

REMINDER FOR PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS! As we enter another dry summer following prior dry months, please remember the following tips:

- Review Emergency Response Plans for drought response measures; make sure information contact numbers are all up-to-date.
- Check water levels in sources/wells and re-assess operational and management plans.
- Consider repairing leaking water mains sooner rather than later.
- Educate the public about the importance of water conservation and repairing leaky household fixtures.

- Review Community Water Conservation Measures, Triggers, Responses, and Enforcement Plans for appropriateness; revise if necessary.
- Discuss any concerns with your local health department.
- Consider information at the following resources:
 - <https://www.ready.gov/drought>
 - <https://www.epa.gov/natural-disasters/drought>
 - <https://emergencypreparedness.cce.cornell.edu/disasters/Pages/Drought.aspx>