

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Changes to annual water restrictions take effect across Cowichan region

DUNCAN, BC – Local governments and water purveyors across the Cowichan region have collaborated to add an additional stage of water restrictions to deal with extreme drought conditions as experienced in the summer of 2021.

Each year on May 1, water systems across the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) collectively implement Stage 1 water restrictions in an effort to conserve water use on residential properties and ensure aquifers and lakes can withstand the increasingly dry summers.

“This year is no exception and we have moved into Stage 1 across the region,” said Todd Etherington, Operations Manager for the Water Management Division of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “One of the significant changes we’ve made is the formal addition of a new Stage 4 that may be required if we see another intense drought on Eastern Vancouver Island as we experienced last year.”

The new Stage 4 prohibits all outdoor uses of potable water, with the exception of two-hour daily maximums for hand-watering and micro-drip irrigation of vegetable gardens and fruit trees, and one-hour daily limits for ornamental trees, shrubs and flower gardens. Other changes to the regional water restrictions include:

- Watering times are now before 9 a.m. or after 7 p.m. for all watering, in all stages. The intent is to prevent watering during the heat of the day and to spread water use to reduce peak demands
- Distinguishing between food and non-food plants
- Distinguishing between commercial vs. residential water use (vehicles, buildings, etc.) in the higher stages of restrictions

“The sad reality is that we can no longer rely on water to be here when we need it, and these restrictions are a necessary exercise for our region half the year,” said Lori Iannidardo, Chair of the Cowichan Valley Regional District. “Living a ‘new normal’ means using only as much water as we need, and getting better at storing water so we have enough to support our ecosystem and economy.”

These changes to water restrictions apply to all CVRD water systems, City of Duncan, Cowichan Tribes, Town of Ladysmith, Town of Lake Cowichan, Mill Bay Water District, Cowichan Bay Waterworks, and Diamond Improvement District. The municipality of North Cowichan is currently considering updating its bylaw to reflect these changes. Residents of other improvement districts and private water systems in the region are encouraged to follow regional water restrictions, but should contact their local system operators for information on any specific regulations which may apply to their system.

Visit the [New Normal Cowichan](#) website to learn more about the updated stages of water-use restrictions, including a [Water Restrictions Map](#) to find the current stage of restrictions on each water system in the region.

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