



Cutting Through the Noise: Clarifying Drought Requirements for the SCV

Why there are Misconceptions, Message Overlap and Misunderstanding

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California is facing a serious multi-year drought, and there is no end in sight. To ensure enough water to meet the current and future needs of communities throughout the state, the Governor required all California water agencies to implement Stage 2 of their Water Shortage Contingency Plan, encouraging all customers to voluntarily reduce water use by up to 20%.

Each of the more than 400 water agencies across California have drought provisions, which include measures specific to their region and conservation potential. And as the drought continues, we may see other water shortage contingency plan actions which differ from those implemented by SCV Water.

As you can imagine, these actions have led to confusion for many of our customers on current drought restrictions in the Santa Clarita Valley versus other areas within the county and throughout the state – and understandably so.

SCV Water's Stage 2 Watering Days Differ from other Agencies

Locally, in April, SCV Water moved to Stage 2 of its Water Shortage Contingency Plan and Water Conservation and Water Supply Shortage Ordinance, which allows SCV Water customers to water their landscapes three days a week.

During the same time our Agency made the move to Stage 2, neighboring agency, Metropolitan Water District (MWD), announced a Water Shortage Emergency for 6 million customers, cutting down outdoor watering to one day a week. More recently, the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power announced two days per week watering for customers in its service area.

Clearing Up the Confusion

We want to be clear that the watering restrictions from neighboring agencies do not affect our customers. Those affected by the one-day-a-week watering through MWD are served by a higher proportion of imported state water, which has been drastically impacted by three consecutive years of drought conditions.

Our Agency has worked hard over the years to diversify where we get our water from. While we do receive some water from the State Water Project, we also have additional local groundwater and banked water stored in neighboring Kern County to draw from in these dry times. Still, as the

drought enters its third year, we all need to conserve to ensure we can meet future water demands during the drought. Every drop saved this year is one we can use next year.

SCV Water’s Additional Stage 2 Watering Requirements

More than half of an average home’s water use is outdoors – and often up to half of that is wasted due to common irrigation issues including broken or misaligned sprinklers, leaking valves, incorrectly programmed irrigation timers, inadequate sprinkler coverage, and runoff caused by applying water at a greater rate than what that soil can absorb. While SCV Water is not asking customers to pull the plug on irrigating their landscapes, we are asking customers to focus on irrigating efficiently and minimizing water waste. It’s in those efforts where we will all see greatest benefit – less water used, a lower water bill and water for tomorrow.

Stage 2 Efficient Irrigation Practices

- **The time of day you water matters.** Watering early in the morning (midnight to 9 a.m.) and/or late at night (8 p.m. to midnight) on your designated day, will reduce water loss due to evaporation from the heat and wind. This keeps more water on your landscape, where it belongs.
- **How long you water matters.** Much of our SCV soil is clay, which means there is typically runoff after 5 minutes of traditional irrigation. By breaking the 10-minute watering time into two short 5-minute or less cycles, your landscape will soak up more of the water it needs (rather than one 10-minute cycle). This is why, on average, half of outdoor water use is wasted.
- **Your irrigation zones matter.** Two 5-minute cycles are allowed per irrigation zone. Meaning, each section of your groundcover, shrubs or other landscaped areas can be watered a maximum of twice a day, no more than 5 minutes each time. Grouping plants of similar irrigation needs allows for the most efficient use of water.

However, if you feel the need to hand water brown spots, you can do so when using a hose with an automatic shutoff nozzle. This smart irrigation practice is more efficient than increasing your irrigation frequency.

Exemptions

There are a few exemptions included in SCV Water’s Water Conservation and Water Shortage Ordinance that protect our landscape investments. Watering day and time limits do not apply to:

- Landscape irrigation zones that use drip irrigation.
- Landscape irrigation zones that use high-efficiency sprinkler nozzles with low precipitation rates (equal to or less than 1 inch per hour).
- The hand watering of established trees as well as fruits and/or vegetables for human consumption. Established trees only need deep watering a few times per month for about

20 minutes. Fruits and vegetables need approximately 1.5 inches of water per week during the summer. And mature crops should be watered every 3 to 7 days during the summer.

For customers with landscapes specifically designed to incorporate fire threat mitigation, SCV Water encourages the use of drip irrigation or high-efficiency sprinkler nozzles, both of which are exempt from the watering day and time restrictions. Keeping these areas sufficiently watered and maintained (weeds and debris cleared, trees and plants trimmed, etc.) will help them perform as intended should wildfire events occur.

We're Here to Help You Save Water

Thank you to our customers for stepping up their water savings during this unprecedented drought. We are committed to providing accurate, up-to-date communication with our community on the drought and invite customers to learn more about the drought, SCV Water's water restrictions, rebates and programs by visiting **DroughtReadySCV.com** or calling Customer Care at (661) 294-0828 for more information.

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