



The Metropolitan District  
water supply • environmental services • geographic information

## DRINKING WATER CONSERVATION INFORMATION FOR MDC CUSTOMERS

*Advanced notice of possible voluntary conservation to be requested if dry conditions continue*

For Immediate Release  
November 2, 2016

**(HARTFORD, CT)** Recently, many water companies across Connecticut have asked their customers to voluntarily reduce water use, and in some cases have imposed water use restrictions on their residential and business customers. Many of these water systems have experienced a significant depletion of their water supplies due to current drought conditions throughout the region and the recent lack of beneficial precipitation.

The Metropolitan District's (MDC) water supply is unique in that it consists exclusively of a surface water supply system of reservoirs that includes the 30.3 billion gallon Barkhamsted Reservoir and the 9.5 billion gallon Nepaug Reservoir. Barkhamsted Reservoir is the single largest drinking water reservoir in the State of Connecticut. MDC does not utilize ground water sources, such as aquifers, for its water supply. Surface reservoirs are much more capable of collecting rapid runoff from less frequent but larger rain events during dry ground conditions. Because of the large depth and size of its reservoirs relative to the amount of water typically used, the MDC is better able to sustain normal operations during drought conditions. To date, the MDC's drinking water reservoir supply stands at approximately 77.3% of capacity, which, assuming no rain at all and continued normal daily water usage, equates to approximately 513 days of supply in storage.

Like all water utilities in Connecticut, the MDC adopts a Water Supply Plan that is reviewed and approved, through a public process, by the Department of Public Health (DPH). Very conservative drought triggers have been established by the MDC as part of our approved Water Supply Plan for drought planning. There are specific conservation measures the MDC requests of its customers when reservoir water storage levels fall below certain percentages of full capacity, which are referred to as "trigger points". The five drought trigger points established by the MDC and approved by DPH are 75%, 53%, 40%, 27% and 10% of reservoir capacity. Each trigger point represents a different drought level condition, each with its own set of recommended action items and potential conservation steps that would be requested or required of MDC's customers.

The first trigger point is 75% of reservoir capacity, called a "Drought Advisory." If current dry weather conditions continue, MDC reservoirs are predicted to reach the 75% level in mid- to late-November. Under a Drought Advisory there are *no water use restrictions* for individual customers. MDC would, however, request that our member town municipal officials look to cut back on water use for non-essential operations such as street cleaning, municipal watering and vehicle washing. At this point, with no water use restrictions in place, the MDC is informing the public in order to be proactive, and urging customers to use water wisely by following basic water saving tips detailed below.

In addition to its own customers, the MDC is party to an interconnection agreement with the City of New Britain. Under the terms of this 1958 agreement, the MDC is obligated to furnish New Britain with untreated water up to an annual average of 5 million gallons per day, not to exceed 10 million gallons in any one day, when requested.

MDC has been advised by the City of New Britain that, due to their current drought trigger conditions and low water supply reservoir levels, the City may soon need to utilize the existing interconnection with the MDC. New Britain may request to start withdrawing water from MDC as early as mid-November of this year.

Therefore, in addition to MDC supporting more than 400,000 people in the greater Hartford region, MDC may soon need to supplement New Britain's supply to the City and its customers in the region, which includes the communities of Bristol and Berlin - an additional population of more than 87,700. The additional withdrawal of water for New Britain and its customers may accelerate the date on which MDC reaches its first drought trigger of 75%.

If the drought continues throughout the winter months, withdrawal of water for New Britain would reduce the time before the MDC reaches the second trigger in its contingency plan, the "Drought Watch" stage, which would be activated when reservoir levels fall to 53% of capacity. Assuming no further precipitation, the MDC currently projects that this second drought trigger would be reached in approximately May of 2017. Given the unknown duration of the drought and amount of future precipitation, MDC must immediately begin to store water within our emergency water source of the West Branch Reservoir, a possible drinking water source as outlined in our approved drought contingency plan.

MDC is responsible to act in the best interest of its customers and member municipalities by remaining proactive and following a very conservative drought contingency plan. The MDC will ensure we can accommodate not only our water obligations to the Hartford region, but also put the MDC drinking water and emergency reservoirs' supply in a position to be able to support the New Britain region as necessary throughout this drought period.

MDC CEO Scott Jellison stated, "While water conservation is always prudent, and there are currently no water use restrictions for MDC customers, MDC feels strongly that providing our customers with advanced notice of any anticipated drought trigger points is both our obligation and appropriate at this time. The MDC is fully capable of meeting expected demands, and we want our customers to be assured MDC is in contact with all appropriate regulatory authorities monitoring the drought conditions. This information is for purposes of providing the public ample opportunity to plan accordingly if MDC finds it necessary to implement the steps outlined under the initial stages of its drought plan. I would like to thank all of you for your understanding in advance; MDC will do everything in its power to protect our customers from adverse impacts due to the drought."

In addition, customers at any point can always follow these basic water saving tips for everyday use:

- Repair leaky toilets and fix leaky faucets.
- Run dishwashers and washing machines with full loads.
- Replace old fixtures and appliances with new water efficient ones.
- Take showers instead of baths.
- Don't run faucets when you brush your teeth or shave.

The MDC will continue to monitor weather conditions and reservoir levels and will advise customers if and when conditions warrant any water use restrictions in our service area.

For additional information on water saving tips: <https://themdc.org/what-we-do/drinking-water/water-tips>

For information on our reservoir levels: <https://themdc.org/what-we-do/drinking-water/water-supply>

**About the MDC:** *The MDC is a nonprofit municipal corporation chartered by the Connecticut General Assembly in 1929. The MDC provides water, sewer and household hazardous waste collection services to its member municipalities: Bloomfield, East Hartford, Hartford, Newington, Rocky Hill, West Hartford, Wethersfield and Windsor. In addition, the District supplies treated water to portions of Glastonbury, South Windsor, Farmington, East Granby and Portland.*

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