



CITY OF CAPE TOWN
ISIXEKO SASEKAPA
STAD KAAPSTAD

LEVEL 3B WATER RESTRICTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CITY OF CAPE TOWN
WATER & SANITATION

01 February 2017



no drop
CERTIFICATION
water use efficiency
REGULATION



green drop
CERTIFICATION
waste water service
REGULATION



blue drop
CERTIFIED
Excellent drinking water quality
MANAGEMENT

These questions and answers have been prepared to help you comply with the Cape Town level 3B water restrictions.

Please also see our water restrictions webpages for [homes](#) and [businesses and organisations](#).

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Irrigation and watering

1. How do the stricter 3B water restrictions, implemented on 1 February, affect watering/irrigation?

Watering/irrigation with municipal drinking water is now only allowed on Tuesdays and Saturdays before 09:00 or after 18:00 for a maximum of one hour per day per property.

No watering/irrigation within 48 hours (previously 24 hours) of rainfall that provides adequate saturation.

The ban on the use of hosepipes or any sprinkler systems when using municipal drinking waters still applies.

2. Can I use my irrigation system and hosepipe if connected to borehole water?

Yes. However, boreholes and wellpoints must be registered and correct signage must be displayed for all alternative water sources (boreholes, wellpoints, grey water systems and rain water tanks). See our water restrictions webpages for [homes](#) and [businesses and organisations](#) for more information on registration and signage.

All borehole/wellpoint users are strongly encouraged to follow the same watering times as applicable for municipal drinking water (Tues and Sat before 09:00 or after 18:00 for a maximum of one hour) in order to show your support for saving water.

We further encourage you to use groundwater sources sparingly and to avoid wastage and evaporation. not to water in the heat of the day or in windy conditions.

3. I am physically disabled / elderly and I can't water my garden with buckets or a watering can. Do I qualify for exemption from the irrigation restrictions?

You may [apply for exemption from water restrictions](#). Please note that each case is treated on merit and there is no blanket approval for the disabled and the aged. Your application must include a motivation and supporting documents about the disability. Copies of your previous 3 months' water bill showing reasonable consumption will further support your application.

However, we strongly encourage you to consider irrigation solutions within the current water restrictions. Please consider:

- Using a smaller watering can
- Planting drought-resistant plants
- Asking a friend or an employee to water your garden
- Installing an irrigation system that uses an alternative water source such as grey-water or borehole water

4. If I have been granted level 3 water restrictions exemption do I need to reapply for exemption from level 3B?

All exemptions granted under level 3 are being reviewed with the possibility of being revoked with the option for reapplication.

All water users with exemptions granted under Level 3 must adhere to Level 3B irrigation days and times. (For example, if you are disabled and were granted exemption to use a hosepipe, you are allowed to use a hosepipe as per your exemption, but now must adhere to level 3B irrigation days and times.)

5. Can I use a dripper irrigation system or soaker hose?

Watering using municipal drinking water only allowed using a bucket or watering can during specified days and times. No use of hosepipes or irrigation systems (including dripper systems and soaker hoses) is allowed.

However, irrigations systems connected to alternative water sources (boreholes, grey water systems and rain water tanks) may be used (see above). We encourage you to use all water sparingly and not to water in the heat of the day or in windy conditions. Please ensure that boreholes/wellpoint are registered and that correct signage is used - see our water restrictions webpages for [homes](#) and [businesses and organisations](#) for more information.

6. I've noticed my neighbour is watering using an irrigation system / hosepipe. What should I do?

Watering with an irrigation system or hosepipe **using municipal drinking water** is not allowed. You could speak with your neighbour to see if they are aware of the watering restrictions. If they aren't aware, direct them to the City's website. If you have concerns please, contact the customer line on 0860 103 089 / sms 31373 (max of 160 characters), send an email to water.restrictions@capetown.gov.za or submit an online request through our [Service Requests](#) tool.

However, please note that use of hosepipes and irrigation systems connected to alternative water sources (such as boreholes, grey water systems and rain water tanks) is allowed. Check if your neighbour has the correct signage for alternative water use. Boreholes and wellpoints need to be registered and the sign should have a registration number. See our water restrictions webpages for [homes](#) and [businesses and organisations](#) for more information.

7. Why is the city still watering along roads?

Some transport routes (e.g. the Integrated Rapid Transit (IRT) bus routes on the West Coast) are supplied with recycled water.

8. Do boreholes need to be registered? Do you pay for registration and the borehole sign?

Wellpoints and boreholes must be registered. The registration is free and signage is provided free on registration. See our website webpage: [Register a borehole](#) for more information.

There is no charge for the consumption of borehole or wellpoint water. However, we encourage you to use groundwater sparingly and not to water in the heat of the day or in windy conditions.

9. I have applied to register my borehole/ wellpoint, but haven't received my official, free display sign from the City. Will I be fined?

Proof of your application for registration will be emailed to you. This can be printed and kept until you receive your official (free) display sign as required by the latest water restrictions. Please note that a 4-6 week waiting period for the signs may apply in busy period. See our website for information on how to register.

10. Do I need to apply for permission in order to sink a new borehole or wellpoint and will I be charged for using this water?

You or your contractor will need to apply. Once installed, the borehole or wellpoint must be registered. There is no charge for using borehole or wellpoint water.

See our website pages:

- [Register a borehole](#)
 - [Apply to sink a borehole or wellpoint or use an alternative source of water](#)
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11. Do I need a display sign if I am using bath water to water my lawn?

Yes, when using greywater you need to put up a sign stating that you are using non-potable water for irrigation clearly visible from a public thoroughfare.

See our water restrictions webpages for [homes](#) and [businesses and organisations](#) for further information.

The sign can be downloaded from this link: [Non-Potable Water - Do Not Drink Sign Poster](#).

12. Can I use my own non-potable water sign?

It depends on what type of alternative water you are using:

Yes - if you are using grey water, rainwater tanks, spring water or treated effluent water.

However, boreholes and wellpoints must be registered (or re-registered) and the official sign with a registration number (provided free on registration) must be used.

13. Can I use bath water to water my garden at any time or only on watering days?

There are no restrictions on watering times when using grey water such as bath water. However, a visible signage saying you are using non-potable water for watering your garden must be displayed. This must be clearly visible from a public thoroughfare. See our website for more information.

14. Can historical / museum gardens be exempt from the water restrictions?

Yes. Exemptions are possible to various types of customers. See our website for how to [apply for exemption from water restrictions](#).

15. How can I report an irrigation violation?

By any of the following methods:

- Call [0860 103 089](tel:0860103089) (choose option 2: water related faults)
 - SMS 31373 (max of 160 characters)
 - Email water.restrictions@capetown.gov.za
 - Online through our [Service Requests](#) tool.
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16. How are homeowners, who use borehole water for their gardens, expected to respond to the water restrictions?

Wellpoints and boreholes must be registered and correct signage must be used. See our website webpage: [Register a borehole](#) for more information.

We encourage you to use groundwater sparingly and not to water in the heat of the day or in windy conditions. Borehole/wellpoint water users are strongly encouraged to follow the same watering times as applicable to drinking water use.

17. Are there watering restrictions for agriculture or vegetable gardens?

Agricultural crops are considered gardens and therefore may only be irrigated using a bucket or watering container if using municipal drinking water. Watering is allowed only on Tuesdays and Saturdays before 09:00 or after 18:00 for a maximum of one hour per day per property.

However, bear in mind that almost all commercial farms have access to non-potable water sources.

18. I live on agricultural land, do watering restrictions apply to me?

The water restriction bylaw applies to all homes and businesses located within the City of Cape Town's jurisdiction. The details vary depending on type of consumer. See our website for how to [apply for exemption from water restrictions](#).

19. Why is irrigation being limited?

It is the one of the largest categories of water use in the City of Cape Town.

Swimming pools

20. Can I fill and top up my swimming pool?

Yes, but all private swimming pools must be fitted with a pool cover and no automatic top-up mechanisms are allowed. Public pools must be fitted with a pool cover where practically possible.

21. Can I use a chemical/liquid pool cover?

Yes, you can top-up your pool if you make use of a chemical/liquid pool cover. However, you need to ensure that the pool cover used is effective in preventing evaporation from the pool and that you correctly follow the dosage instructions. You must also keep your invoices to prove adequate maintenance of your chemical/liquid pool cover to City of Cape Town Water Inspectors if your property is inspected. Be aware that this type of pool cover may not be effective in windy areas.

22. Can I use a hosepipe to top-up my swimming pool?

Yes. The restriction on hosepipe use only applies to irrigation/watering.

23. Will restrictions affect municipal swimming pools?

Municipal and public swimming pools should be fitted with a pool cover where practically possible. No automatic top-up systems are allowed.

General

24. What are the main differences between level 3 and level 3B water restrictions?

Level 3B restrictions are stricter. Key enhancements include:

- Irrigation/watering (using municipal drinking water) only allowed on Tuesdays and Saturdays before 09:00 and after 18:00 for a maximum of one hour per day per property and only if using a bucket or watering can. No use of hosepipes or irrigation systems allowed.
- No washing of vehicles (including taxis at transport interchanges) and boats using municipal water. Vehicles or boats must be washed with non-potable water or washed at a commercial carwash. (Washing cars with non-potable water not applicable to commercial car washes.)
- No watering/irrigation is allowed within 48 hours of rainfall that provides adequate saturation. Facilities/customers making use of boreholes, treated effluent water, spring water or well-points are not exempt.
- No increase of the indigent water allocation over and above the free 350ℓ a day will be granted, unless through prior application and permission for specific events such as burial ceremonies.

25. Must koi ponds and water features be fitted with a cover?

The regulations do not require fish ponds and water features to be covered. However, you are strongly encouraged not to use of water features until the water restrictions have been lifted.

26. Am I allowed to wash my car?

Private washing of cars using municipal drinking water is not allowed. Cars must be washed with non-potable water, cleaned with waterless products or washed at a commercial carwash.

Please note that informal carwashes are allowed to use municipal drinking water if they use buckets and not hosepipes. However, they are not allowed to operate at transport interchanges.

We suggest that you wash your vehicle less often and write on the vehicle's bodywork "I'M SAVING WATER" to show your support.

27. How will the City police restrictions?

Water Inspectors will monitor compliance with the restriction measures, over and above the Water Bylaw in its entirety and issue spot fines where applicable.

The public are normally our most vigilant enforcers and we want you to report anyone who does not adhere to water restrictions using the following methods:

- Call [0860 103 089](tel:0860103089) (choose option 2: water related faults)
- SMS 31373 (max of 160 characters)

- Email water.restrictions@capetown.gov.za
- Online through our [Service Requests](#) tool

These reports are used to target blitz in different areas. In addition, the City is using water billing information to focus compliance indicatives towards high water consumers.

28. I have reported a water leak. Why hasn't anyone come to fix it?

The city services a pipe network of close to 11 000 km (the equivalent distance from here to Australia), to which 650 000 properties are connected. Every year approximately 3 000 burst water mains and over 30 000 leaking water connections are repaired. Old pipes are more likely to leak or burst and the City has an extensive pipe replacement project underway. Although pipe replacement is expensive, many kilometers are replaced each year and this has resulting in a dramatic reduction in pipe bursts.

We have a limited number of repair teams available and large pipe bursts and leaks are prioritized over smaller bursts and leaks. Once a leak is reported, a first response team will assess the leak or burst and this information is used to assign an appropriately equipped repair team as well as to prioritise the repair. Most large pipe bursts are attended to within one hour and repaired as soon as possible, however, smaller leaks may take some time to be repaired. A large burst can waste more water in a few seconds than a small burst or leak can over a period of a week. The City often receives complaints about bursts and leaks being forgotten. However, the reality is often that repair teams are simply prioritising larger bursts elsewhere in the city.

29. How, where and what is the procedure that should be followed to apply for an exemption should I be entitled/request for one?

See our website for how to [apply for exemption from water restrictions](#). Please be patient. A delay may be experience in busy periods.

30. I need to make application for exemption for more than one property. Do I need to submit an application for each property or can I submit a single application?

A single application can be submitted for multiple properties - as long as the application is relevant to all properties. For example, a nursery business with multiple outlets across the city can submit a single application. Please include a list of all erf numbers and addresses as an annexure.

31. Will I be penalized or punished with some additional penalty fee for not using less water than what I am currently using?

There are no penalties for consumers who don't make additional water savings. However, the price of water has increased – especially for large domestic consumers. This means that

you will pay more for the same amount of water used. This is necessary in order to encourage water savings. Due to the city's increasing block tariff for domestic consumers, this will have very little effect on small consumers and water efficient households. On the other hand, large domestic consumers will pay a significantly higher marginal price for water.

For an average customer the tariffs should be cost neutral. In other words if an average customer reduce consumption by 30%, their bill should remain at a similar rand value.

32. I want to clean my roof using a high-pressure hose, but I am not using a contractor. Do I need an exemption and will I get it?

You need to apply for an exemption. Conditional approval may be granted. Please note that the exemption will be for a defined period that will be determined by the Director: Water and Sanitation. See our website for how to [apply for exemption from water restrictions](#).

33. What is normal consumption and how much water should I be using? How do I know how much water I am using?

Most households use between 6 and 20 kl a month (between 200 and 600 litres per day). However, houses with large gardens and swimming pools generally use much more water. More than 30 kl per month (1000 litres per day) can be considered as relatively high consumption. Learn more about water consumption in Cape Town on page 37 and 38 of the [Water Services and the Cape Town Urban Water Cycle booklet](#).

Your monthly consumption is printed on your municipal account in kilolitres (kl). One kilolitre is a 1000 litres. Your meter reading and consumption can also be monitored via [e-Services](#). Please note that consumption is dependent on the interval between meter readings. An estimate is generated if your meter was not read in that month. Alternatively, you can read your own meter and keep track of your consumption.

Remember that your water and sewerage bill depends on your consumption. The price of water increases the more you use. This is in order to encourage water saving. Click [here](#) for information on tariffs.

34. How effective were previous water restrictions? How did consumption patterns change in that period of restrictions?

The water restrictions imposed in 2005 resulted in 15.5% savings - most of which was sustained. This indicates that a large proportion of consumers changed their habits permanently and installed alternatives, such as boreholes, greywater irrigation systems, and in some cases laid paving to minimize irrigation requirements.

However, the level 2 water restrictions imposed on 1 January 2016 achieved less than 10% savings.

35. What penalties are proposed this time?

Currently spot fines of up to R3 000 may be issued by the City of Cape Town in terms of the Water Bylaw. Repeat offenders could be summonsed to appear in court and on conviction may be liable for a fine of up to R10 000, or imprisonment of up to 5 years, or both.

The approval of the 3B fine schedule by the Magistrates' Court is expected to be in place shortly. A higher amount for spot fines of R5 000 has been proposed as part of the fine schedule. This is part of efforts to intensify the current restriction measures as introduced by Level 3B restrictions.

36. Experience and common sense show us that rich people, who are also the heaviest water users, will be able to afford the punitive water tariffs and therefore will have no incentive to save water. Poor people, on the other hand, will not be able to afford them, so are likely to bear the brunt of the higher prices or having to cope with less water. What steps are being taken to address this?

The free water allocation remains free and is set at 6 kilolitres per domestic household. The lower steps of the tariff structure have low increases, while the higher steps are subjected to higher percentage increases, thus assisting the poor and those who save water. Informal settlement residents receive all water for free.

37. A water consumption reduction of 30% implies a reduction of 30% in the City's income from water and sewerage. How will this affect the council's operations?

The tariff is designed to be revenue-neutral when applied to the current consumption levels. The proposed increases are designed to recover the loss in income/revenue due to the reduction in billed consumption, so no operational consequences /effects are expected.

38. I understand why water tariffs increase. But why do sanitation tariffs also increase?

Water tariffs increase (especially for large water users) to encourage water saving.

Sanitation tariffs increase for cost recovery reasons. Sanitation charges are based on water consumption as most water used ultimately ends up in the sewers. Due to the restrictions we expect to sell less water. We thus need to increase sanitation tariffs to compensate as many sanitation costs, such as staff and maintenance costs, are fixed and do not decrease with the expected lower sewage volumes. Please note that sanitation charges are capped at 35kl.

39. If there's a significant decrease in the flow of water through the city's sewerage system, will this affect its operation? Are there any health risks associated with this?

Most of the water saving comes from a reduction in irrigation or other "luxury" uses like swimming pools. It is therefore not expected that there will be any serious effect on the sewerage system. This will however be monitored.

40. How will you make allowances for large households? It would be unreasonable to expect someone living alone to be able to save as much water as a family of six living in the house next door.

While there is no simple or inexpensive way to monitor the number of people in a household for every connection, the free water does allow for a free basic allocation of 25 litres per day for a household of up to 8 people. This is the basis for the 6 kilolitres for each household. Each and every one of us can save water, the volume/extent will differ from person to person, but whatever the volume, it makes a difference and is well appreciated.

41. Will restrictions affect spray parks?

No. Spray parks are allowed to operate but must be strictly managed to minimise water wastage.

City of Cape Town spray parks are designed with water efficiency in mind and use less water than a swimming pool.

42. What special arrangements (if any) are being made to ensure the maintenance of the City's golf courses? Have you quantified the amount of water used to water golf courses?

Almost all golf courses in the City are irrigated using recycled (treated effluent) water from wastewater treatment plants, boreholes or other resources.

43. Will you continue to use municipal trucks to spray road surfaces during the period of restrictions? If so, why? And how much water do they consume?

Municipal street-cleaning generally uses non-potable water.

44. What steps is the Council, as a water consumer itself, taking to ensure it reduces its usage?

The City continuously identifies its large water use points and engages with the relevant directorates to determine areas of water saving, for example the retro-fitting program which entails the removal of automatic flushing urinals in its buildings. All council directorates are also expected and bound to comply with the restrictions in their water-related activities.

45. What steps are you expecting provincial consumers – such as schools and hospitals – to take to reduce consumption?

The water restriction notice applies to all users. Council has embarked on a partnership with schools to help reduce consumption through its awareness and education programme on water saving and the training of school caretakers to fix leaks. Other water saving tips for [businesses and organisations](#) are available on the City's website.

46. Can a stepped penalty be introduced, so that those who consume less than 25 kl per month, for example, are not required to reduce their usage at all?

This is the basic principle applied in the proposed tariff increase, those using less water pay less, and those using more water pay more.

47. Sectional title owners who save water will still be penalized if other owners in their block continue to be wasteful or profligate. How will you address this?

The planned media campaign is aimed at ensuring that everyone co-operates and contributes to the targeted savings in water consumptions. It is therefore hoped that fellow water saving residents will bring the appropriate pressure to bear on those who may not be so inclined.

48. Who are the 10 biggest water consumers in the City of Cape Town?

Consumption figures for individual consumers are confidential and cannot be released to the public. However, the largest users in the city include developments such as large shopping centres and office blocks, institutions and certain industries. Many residential properties with large gardens and swimming pool also have high water consumption. Large users (>10 000 kℓ/annum) are required to conduct annual water audits (in line with schedule of the Water by-law, 2010) and systems are in place to monitor their consumption.

Can owners of boats rinse and flush their motors after fishing?

Flushing of motors is permitted within the ambit of the restriction measures.

49. Can someone who uses borehole water to water grass and plants (therefore saving water) use their hosepipe to wash their car in the allocated times?

Yes. However, we encourage you to rather use a bucket. If you do use a hosepipe then please ensure that it is fitted with an automatic self-closing device.

50. Are notices in three languages being provided at e.g. cash offices, libraries, clinics etc?

Notices will be displayed at all City buildings and other public spaces.

51. Are car valet services compelled to use trigger nozzles on hoses?

Yes.

52. Who do you fine if Council is contravening the water restrictions?

This matter will be dealt with in accordance with City procedures.

53. Is it illegal to wash down the forecourt of a petrol station?

Hosing down is not allowed. If washing must be done, a bucket must be used.

54. If a person has a visible leak on their property and is not in a position to fix it, what can be done? Does Council have a system in place whereby a plumber will be sent to repair the leak and bill the tenant?

It is the owner's responsibility to employ the services of a registered plumbing contractor to attend to the problem, at the owner's cost.

However, the City does have a programme where the properties of qualifying indigent households are repaired on a once-off basis.

55. I have hired a company to power wash my driveway, is this allowed under the current watering restrictions?

No, power washing driveways with drinking water is not allowed, unless the business owner has obtained an exemption. See our website for how to [apply for exemption from water restrictions](#).

56. Do you have any water saving tips?

Yes. See our water saving tips for [homes](#) and [businesses and organisations](#) on our website.

57. My charity was planning a fund-raising carwash. Can we still proceed?

Yes, only if non-potable water or waterless cleaning products are used.

58. I work in the poorer areas of the City and I regularly see large volumes of water running to waste in these areas where the occupants cannot afford to repair the leaks. What has the City done and what are they doing about this?

The City has a project in place in terms of its policies, to repair leaks at indigent properties and install a water management device in order to control the water usage to prevent further leaks and water wastage.

59. Why must I save water when I see people in informal settlements wasting water which they don't pay for?

It is important that all residents help save water. The City is sensitising residents, from all areas, about the need to use water sparingly. Water consumption from all areas (including informal settlements) is being monitored.

Water consumption per person in informal settlements is generally much lower than that of formal residential areas, where there is a greater demand for irrigation. Overall, only 5% of Cape Town's water is consumed in informal areas. See page 37 of the [Water Services and the Cape Town Urban Water Cycle booklet](#) for a breakdown of water consumption per user type.

All domestic users receive free basic services. Formal customers receive 6 000 litre per month free of charge, while informal settlement residents receive free water via communal taps.

60. What is the City doing about the homeless people using the City's fire hydrants to wash vehicles?

Using fire hydrants, by anyone, for anything other than their intended purpose without permission is an illegal act (refer to section 55 of the Water Bylaw) so is water wastage (refer to section 37 of the Water by-law) and such contraventions will be dealt with in accordance with existing legal processes in terms of section 64 of the Water Bylaw. If you notice this, please contact the customer line on 0860 103089 / sms 31373 or send an email to WaterTOC@capetown.gov.za.

61. Can my kids use the sprinkler in the backyard?

No. The use of sprinklers is not allowed. We would encourage you to check out one of our water spray parks.

62. Can I pull my vehicle along the side of a river and wash it with bucket water on the river bank? If not, then why not?

No, the cumulative impact would threaten the ecological life of the system. Rivers are considered part of a stormwater system, so abstraction without permission and disturbance

of the river banks are acts in direct violation of section 4 (g) and (h) of the Stormwater Management By-law.

63. May paved areas be hosed down with municipal tap water?

No. Please use a broom.

64. I want to hire a water slide. Do I need an exemption or does the person hiring it out to me need one?

The business owner must obtain an exemption.