



New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

NJ Drought Management

Division Water Supply and Geoscience
Water Supply Planning and Modeling

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NJ Drought Stages

- Drought Watch - Moderate water demands (residential/public water supplies) through voluntary water conservation by increasing public awareness.
- Drought Warning - Continues to urge voluntary conservation and establishes DEP authority to manage supplies directly.
 1. modify passing flows or reservoir releases,
 2. require transfers of water between purveyors to balance supplies,
 3. require leak detections by water suppliers, require interconnection tests by water suppliers
 4. provide discretion for water allocation permit diversion limits.

Water Supply Status and Actions

Normal 

Routine monitoring of water supply and meteorological indicators. All conditions normal.

Watch 

Focus placed on voluntary reductions in demand through increased public awareness.

Current Status

Warning 

DEP Commissioner issues order urging public to voluntarily use water sparingly; DEP may issue orders to purveyors to manage supplies in most affected regions.

Emergency 

Governor orders mandatory restrictions on certain uses of water, usually phased in as conditions deteriorate.



Drought Emergency



A potential/actual water shortage endangering public health, safety and welfare exists.



Governor declares a Water Emergency via an Executive Order



Commissioner issues an Administrative Order with restrictions. There are four phases of restrictions.



Commissioner Appoints Drought Coordinator and members of the Water Emergency Task Force.



NJDEP staff continue to engage internal workgroups, water systems, and the newly created Water Emergency Task Force.

Phase 1: Mandatory outdoor reductions or rationing. *(Last Time 2002 Drought Emergency)*

Phase 2: Indoor rationing. *(Last and Only Time was 1985 Drought Emergency)*

- Non-residential subject to emergency rate schedule.
- Residential subject to 50 gpcd rationing.

Phase 3: Industrial rationing. *(Never Implemented)*

Phase 4: Disaster Stage. *(Never Implemented)*

- Public Health and Safety not guaranteed.
- Possible Interruption of services.
- Further curtailment and or closing of industry.

Water Emergency Task Force:

- DEP
- OEM
- AG
- DOT
- Labor
- Health & Human Services
- BPU
- State Department
- Commerce
- Education
- Treasury
- DCA
- State Police
- Vet Affairs
- Law & Public Safety
- EDA



WMAC's Primary Question...

“Does your state permit agency require the development of a drought management contingency plan during the water allocation/permitting process?”



The Answer...

YES



CHAPTER 19 SUBCHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

7:19-1.1 Scope and authority

Water Supply Allocation Permit rules

Statutory authority: N.J.S.A. 58:1A-1 et seq.; N.J.S.A. 58:2-1 et seq.; N.J.S.A. 58:4A-4.1 et seq.; N.J.S.A. 58:11-59 et seq.; and N.J.S.A. 58:12A-1 et seq.

Date last amended: January 5, 2026

Legal Authority

These rules are legally backed by several state acts, including the *Water Supply Management Act*, the *Excess Diversion Act*, the *Safe Drinking Water Act*, the *Small Water Company Takeover Act*, and the *Subsurface and Percolating Waters Act*.

Who is Affected

Any person or entity with the capacity to divert more than 100,000 gallons of water per day must follow these reporting procedures and schedules. These entities must use these rules to establish their water privileges and secure specific permits, such as a **Water Supply Allocation Permit**, a **Temporary Dewatering Permit**, or a **Water Use Registration**.



Drought Plan Development?

Water Conservation and Drought Management Plans (plan) defined under NJAC 7:19-1.3 as “the plan governing actions to be taken by a permittee under a drought warning or in a water emergency, and the permittee’s ongoing effort to conserve water” is required to be submitted:

- A. With all water allocation applications (except those for diversions used for ground water remediation, sand and gravel mining or water which is returned to its source without substantial diminution in quantity – i.e. undiminished Return, construction dewatering, etc.),
- B. With a Critical Area Base Allocation Transfer application for the receiving party in an application,
- C. With a Contract Approval Application for both the seller and buyer,



What is in the Plan?

Per NJAC 7:19-6.5(a)3 plans shall be submitted on forms provided by the Department and shall include:

- i. A description of water conservation components;
- ii. Interim, voluntary water use restrictions for implementation during corresponding stages of drought warning, drought emergency, precipitation deficits or reservoir storage deficits;
- iii. Voluntary transfers of water via interconnections between water supply systems for use when prescribed reservoir storage level thresholds are reached;
- iv. Other measures designed to reduce demand, consumption or water usage or loss, or which otherwise have the effect of maximizing water supplies during periods in which precipitation is lower than average and/or water supply storage is less than normal; and
- v. For purveyors with water supply reservoirs, rule curves for reservoirs that can be used to establish storage level thresholds.



How frequently are plans updated?

Per NJAC 7:19-2.14, plans are required to be updated “by the date specified in the permit” and permits typically require updates to the plan every other year.

Compliance to the regulations is high for submittal with applications. An application filed **without** a plan is considered administratively **incomplete** and failure to submit a plan is **grounds for application return or denial**.

- Compliance varies for submittal of regularly scheduled plan updates with larger purveyors typically better than smaller purveyors.
- Updates for permitted uses other than purveyors varies significantly.



Thank you

Links to Web Info

- <https://dep.nj.gov/watersupply/water-allocation/>
- <https://dep.nj.gov/drought/>
- <https://dep.nj.gov/drought/news-and-announcements/#drought-related-executive-and-administrative-orders>

Please direct all written comments to:

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