



Fact Sheet

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania • Department of Environmental Protection

DROUGHT EMERGENCY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following brief answers are offered as guidelines only to commonly asked questions concerning the ban on nonessential water uses in drought emergency areas. These answers do not take into consideration special circumstances and are not a legal substitute for the actual regulations. For a complete answer, consult the regulations at 4 Pa. Code Chapter 119. They can be found on the DEP website (directLINK "Drought").

GOLF COURSES

Can golf courses be watered?

Tees, greens and fairways may be watered between the hours of 5 p.m. and 10 a.m. in accordance with a drought operating plan approved by the Commonwealth Drought Coordinator. These plans limit watering to 70 percent of normal monthly quantities, based on metered monthly values for the previous five years. Heat sensitive grasses on tees, greens and fairways may be syringed for a maximum of 15 minutes, between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m., by means of a hand-held hose equipped with an automatic shutoff nozzle.

What are heat sensitive grasses?

Typically Poa Annuua and Bent grass. These grasses may be syringed on fairways for short 15-minute periods during daytime stress periods. The activity should be posted at the clubhouse and on the course so that the public is made aware that the syringing is permitted.

What is syringing?

Syringing is a short 15-minute watering during the heat of the day to cool and moisten grasses to keep them from dying, but not to prevent dormancy.

POOLS

Can swimming pools be filled by pumping water from an area stream, lake or pond and trucking water to the site?

No. Common law only allows riparians (landowners whose property borders a stream) to withdraw water for reasonable use on the property so long as other landowners are not unreasonably harmed. Water may not be trucked off the land bordering the

stream. Swimming pools may be filled from public water supply systems with the permission of the public water supplier or from a water source on the property where the pool is located. Most public water suppliers know how their local supply is holding up and can determine whether their system can afford to sell water to their own customers for swimming pools without jeopardizing their existing customers.

Can kiddie pools be filled?

Yes. Kiddie pools that are strictly fill and draw and that have no recirculation equipment are not considered swimming pools, as swimming and diving are not possible in these. When emptying kiddie pools, the water should be reused for watering bushes, shrubs or garden areas.

MISCELLANEOUS

Can high school and college football fields be watered?

Yes. Nonsand-based athletic fields may be watered between the hours of 5 p.m. and 9 a.m., one night per calendar week, in accordance with a schedule submitted in advance to the Commonwealth Drought Coordinator, the local law enforcement agency and, if applicable, the public water supply agency from which the water is drawn. Sand-based athletic fields may be watered in accordance with a plan approved by the Commonwealth Drought Coordinator.

Is dust control on dirt tracks and the dirt portions of baseball infields allowed?

Dust control on athletic fields is prohibited, unless necessary to protect health and safety. On dirt racetracks, health and safety is clearly an issue and dust control will be allowed. On baseball fields,

health and safety is not an issue and dust control is not allowed.

Is dust control on construction sites allowed?

Yes. Generally, dust control is not banned in the Chapter 119 regulations; however, it should only be done at the minimum rate necessary.

Can fountains and waterfalls for fish ponds be operated to aerate the water and keep fish alive?

Yes, fountains and waterfalls may be operated to aerate fish ponds and keep aquatic life alive. Operation of fountains and waterfalls is prohibited if used only for ornamental purposes.

Can water be used for firefighter training?

Water from a fire hydrant may not be used for this purpose. Water from tanker trucks may be used for this purpose; however, if the tanker trucks are filled from fire hydrants, then approval must first be obtained from the public water supply system.

Can livestock be watered and groomed in preparation for showing at fairs?

Yes. There is nothing in the Chapter 119 regulations that bans the washing of livestock.

Can large commercial vegetable/flower gardens be watered by means other than a hand-held hose if the produce is sold to the general public?

Vegetable gardens, regardless of size or ownership, are used for production of food, and irrigation for the production of food is allowed. Commercial flower gardens, operated to produce stock for sale to the public, are considered nurseries, and nurseries are allowed to irrigate. However, irrigation should be done at the minimum rate necessary for plant growth. Watering should be done after 5:00 p.m. and before 9:00 a.m. to the maximum extent possible.

Can lawns be watered if from a private water well that is not part of a public water supply system?

No. The nonessential use restrictions prohibit the use of any water, regardless of source, for this purpose.

Can water be used to drive pesticides into the ground for grub control?

Yes, but only one time during the effective period of the Governor's emergency proclamation.

May water be used to wash sidewalks and patios at eating places?

In general, sidewalks and patios should be swept for cleaning. However, if there is material that requires water for removal, then washing for sanitary purposes is allowed on premises of food vending establishments.

Can a well be pumped to fill a pond?

Yes, but only to the minimum extent necessary to maintain fish and aquatic life that may exist in the pond. The Chapter 119 regulations apply to the pond water as well as to the well water.

NOTE: INDIVIDUAL PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIERS OR POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS MAY APPLY STRICTER REGULATIONS BASED ON CURRENT LOCAL CONDITIONS.

For More Information, contact:

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This fact sheet and related environmental information are available electronically via Internet. For more information, visit us through the PA PowerPort at <http://www.state.pa.us> or visit DEP directly at <http://www.dep.state.pa.us> (directLINK "Drought").



www.GreenWorks.tv - A web space dedicated to helping you learn how to protect and improve the environment. The site features the largest collection of environmental videos available on the Internet and is produced by the nonprofit Environmental Fund for Pennsylvania, with financial support from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, 877-PA-GREEN.