



This Summer
Reduce Your Use!

Paso Robles Water Resources Situation Questions and Answers

Q: Why is the 3-day watering schedule needed and why are residents being asked to reduce outdoor water use by up to 50 percent and overall water use by 25 percent?

The City currently depends on wells for 100% of its water supply. Due to a multi-year drought and increased pumping of groundwater in the Paso Robles area, groundwater levels have been dropping steadily for several years. Lower groundwater levels in turn have resulted in decreasing well production rates. Production at some City wells is only 60 percent of the production rates seen a few years ago. In simple terms, the City's wells cannot produce enough water to meet projected peak summer water demands. This summer, demand is expected to exceed supply by an estimated 20 percent or 2.5 million gallons per day. On average, if water customers reduce their outdoor water use by 50 percent, the City's water demand can be reduced enough so that a shortfall does not occur this summer.

Q: Why are water demands so much higher in the summer than in the winter?

Daily water demands in Paso Robles during the summer months are almost 350% higher than daily demands during the winter months. This increase is due primarily to increased irrigation use during the summer. That is why it is so important for residents, businesses, and all water users to reduce outdoor use significantly this summer.

Q: What could happen if water use exceeds the City's well production capability and a water shortage occurs?

Storage levels at the City's water tanks can drop to the point where: 1) insufficient reserves exist for emergencies and fire fighting, and 2) water pressure in the distribution system could drop to levels low enough to allow contamination of the water supply from bacteria and other harmful substances, making the water unfit to drink. In both cases, the public's health and safety would be jeopardized.

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Q: What has the City done to increase the City's water supply so that water shortages do not occur?

The City has improved well production capability through well rehabilitation efforts, installing new wells, and adding water treatment systems to wells that were taken out of service due to water quality concerns. In spite of these efforts, overall well production capacity has been declining since 2004. To reduce the likelihood of summer water production shortfalls, the City had planned to be constructing a water treatment plant by this time so that water deliveries from Lake Nacimiento could begin by mid-2010. Delays in adopting the water rates necessary to pay for this project have prevented this new supply project from moving forward.

Q: What is the long-term outlook for water supply in Paso Robles? Will water conservation measures be needed in future years?

The era of inexpensive and plentiful water supplies is over for Paso Robles, as it is for most areas of California and the western U.S. Even when new supplies are developed, like Lake Nacimiento water, competition for groundwater in the basin is projected to increase, placing additional pressure on the City's water supplies. Therefore, water conservation and wise use of our water resources will continue to play a key role in creating a sustainable water future for Paso Robles. The City has also developed a plan to recycle treated wastewater for irrigation uses by 2020. The City plans to develop a comprehensive water conservation plan with the goal of significantly reducing per capita water use and peak summer demand. A major part of this effort will be to encourage use of low water use, climate-appropriate plants and drip irrigation in new landscapes, and conversion of existing turf areas to climate-appropriate landscape materials.

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**City of Paso Robles
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For more information go to:
www.pasowater.com**