

DROUGHT IN MASSACHUSETTS

Frequently Asked Questions



What is a drought?

A drought is an unusually long period (2+ months) of dry weather that reduces water availability. Droughts can lead to problems like crop damage, water shortages, increased fire risk, dry streams, and habitat loss. The severity of a drought depends on the rain deficit, time of year, and duration. Check the latest hydrologic data [here](#).



Who declares droughts in MA? How are they determined? What are the different levels of drought?

Massachusetts uses a Drought Management Plan with four drought levels across seven regions. Drought levels are based on data like rainfall, streamflow, groundwater, reservoir levels, fire danger, and evapotranspiration. The Drought Management Task Force reviews this data and makes recommendations to the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, who declares the drought levels. For updates on current drought status, click [here](#).



What level of drought is my area in?

Massachusetts is divided into seven drought regions. Find your region's current drought level [here](#).



Where does my drinking water come from?

Drinking water may come from wells, reservoirs, or rivers. Some towns use a mix of sources, while MWRA communities get water from the Quabbin and Wachusett reservoirs. Contact your local public works/water department to learn more.



How does the drought impact me?

Drought can reduce water for households, fire protection, and the natural environment. Using water efficiently helps stretch supplies until conditions improve and supports your community's water sources.



Who can I go to if I need additional water or resources?

If you have a private well that is running dry, contact your local town office and board of health to report it. If your town has a public water supplier or fire department, contact them to see if you can temporarily hook up to their system. In addition, farmers may contact the MA Department of Agricultural Resources for assistance.

DID YOU KNOW?

Turning off water when brushing teeth & shaving can save
10 gallons per person/day



Installing a high efficiency toilet can save
19 gallons per person/day



Washing full loads of clothes can save
15-45 gallons per load



Washing a full load of dishes can save
5-15 gallons per load



On average,
10% of homes have leaks that waste
90 gallons or more per day.



LET US KNOW about any drought-related impacts you experience through our [drought impact reporter](#).

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP DURING A DROUGHT?

Conserving water is always a good idea, but it is especially important during times of drought. We can all help reduce the impact of the drought by using less water, and if the drought becomes more severe, we can increase our conservation in response.



Look for leaks in homes and businesses. Check pipes, fixtures, and appliances. Inspect water meters for constant dial movement. Use dye tabs or food coloring to check for toilet leaks.



Avoid outdoor watering during the growing season. If you have a vegetable patch that needs some water, use a hand-held device only. Lawns naturally go dormant when water is scarce and revive when conditions improve.



Avoid letting the water run, take shorter showers, and wash only full loads of dishes and laundry. **Be mindful of indoor water use and use only what is necessary.**



Make sure your water fixtures are **WaterSense efficient**.



See how much you can save! Use the **MA Home Water Use Calculator tool** to help evaluate your household use.



Use drought-resistant, native plants in your garden and employ **water-smart landscaping principles**.



Talk to your friends and neighbors about conserving water!



MORE WATER SAVING TIPS

MASS.GOV/CONSERVEMAWATER