

FAQs for Cobb County's Drought Response Plan

What is the Cobb County Drought Response Plan?

It is Cobb County's emergency response plan to deal with the severe 150 year drought event.

When does the amended Drought Response Plan become effective?

The exemption for hand watering (defined as one person with one hose, with a shut-off nozzle) can be done after March 1, 2008, for 25 minutes on the odd even schedule between the hours of Midnight -10 AM.

Even and Unnumbered addresses may water Mondays, Wednesday, and Saturdays.

Odd numbered addresses may water on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays.

Pool filling and new landscape exemptions go into effect on April 1, 2008.

Can I fill my pool?

Starting April 1, 2008, pools will be able to be filled and topped off as necessary. Tips for additional water saving opportunities involving pools can be found at www.cobbwater.org.

I want to drain my pool and refill it instead of treating the water can I do that?

In order to prevent the waste of water all pools need to be chemically treated, if possible and then opened. If the pool cannot be chemically treated the pool company should contact the Water Efficiency Program at 770-419-6244 to obtain a pool fill waiver. Also note Cobb Water provides no sewer credit for pool filling unless it is necessitated by a structural repair.

I need to drain pool to repair it do I need any paperwork?

No proper pool maintenance is essential to preventing water loss. Companies doing structural repairs can drain a pool and refill it. They may send the Water Efficiency Program Manager an e-mail with date, location and reason for refill if the customer would like to have that information filed. E-mail Kathy.nguyen@cobbcounty.org.

I know I can't drain my pool. I have a pond that needs to be drained periodically. Can I do that?

If the pond sustains aquatic life (fish, frogs, etc.), the customer can drain the pond and refill it as needed for maintenance to sustain that life. We do ask they limit this activity as much as possible and try to use the drained water for landscape.

Can I use my 25 minutes of hand watering for other activities (washing my car, washing my dog, cleaning off equipment, etc.)

No. These activities are still banned at the State Drought Response Level 4.

The State made very specific exemptions the reasons are:

- 1) To assist the landscape/nursery industries who are suffering enormous losses.
- 2) To limit the environmental damage caused by the total ban such as damaged trees and excessive erosion.
- 3) Closed pools posed a significant health risk.

- 4) The drought is not over. The purpose of loosening restrictions was not to allot everyone time to use water outdoors it was for the specific outlined purposes.

What if I have a fountain?

Use of ornamental fountains are prohibited, even recirculating fountains. The only exception would be if they are filled and maintained from an alternate source. This would require an inspection from our water ban enforcement manager. Call 770-419-6274 for an appointment. Once approved a sign must be posted indicating the fountain is run from an alternate source.

What are the rules for landscape watering?

1. Hand watering defined as one person with one hose with a shut off nozzle will be allowed for 25 minutes a day on the odd/even watering schedule. Even and unnumbered addresses may water Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays and odd addresses may water on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays between the hours of Midnight – 10 AM **effective March 1, 2008**.
2. An exemption is allowed for new landscape installations this includes aeration and overseeding.
 - a. These new installations may be watered for a period of 10 weeks following installation on the odd/even watering schedule.
 - b. **Only** newly installed landscaping may be watered, with an irrigation system, all other watering must follow the hand watering exemption.
 - c. Irrigation systems may be used to water newly installed landscaping **only** between the hours of **Midnight and 10 AM**.

In order to qualify for a new landscape exemption the customer (defined as someone on the property) must enroll in the Urban Agriculture Council's online Water Conservation Class at www.outdoorwateruse.com. **Please note: a landscaper may not take the quiz for the property representative or homeowner.** If you have a problem with the quiz please contact info@urbanagcouncil.com. Forms obtained from the course **along with a Cobb County Landscape Exemption form** <http://water.cobbcountyga.gov/pdf/outdoorexemptionform.pdf> and a purchase receipt must be sent to:

The Water Efficiency Program
660 South Cobb Dr.
Marietta, GA 30060
Or Faxed to 770-419-6478

A customer may also fill out the online Exemption form and put in their certificate number found at <https://www.cobbcountyga.gov/secure/water/efficiency.htm>.

- d. A New landscape exemption must be filed for every new planting.
 - e. **Failure to submit the forms and receipt may result in a water ban violation and possible discontinuation of an irrigation account.**
3. New home construction will have 10 weeks to water newly installed landscape on the above odd/even schedule, for the purpose of erosion and sedimentation control. A builder may choose to heavily mulch a property instead until water conditions improve. Builders must also file new landscape exemption with the County Water Efficiency Program.

4. Irrigation only accounts found in violation of the outdoor restrictions will be terminated and locked off until the end of Drought Response Level 4.
5. Irrigation of personal food gardens is exempt from all restrictions.
6. Use of reclaimed water for example rain water or air conditioner condensate is exempt from restrictions.
7. Water from an alternate source, for example pumping from a personal creek or well are exempt from the restrictions. We caution that these water bodies also face difficulty during the drought and are unlikely to recharge. Drawing down these smaller bodies does impact streams and rivers that are fed by these sources.
8. Any alternate source must be permitted through our Water Ban Enforcement Division make an appointment at 770-419-6274. Once approved a water proof sign will have to be visible from the property delineating watering from an alternate source.

What if I don't have internet access how can I take the quiz to plant new landscape?

This quiz will be available through the Cobb County Extension office. Please call to make an appointment at 770-528-4070. There is no charge for taking the quiz at extension.

If I can't hand water can I run my sprinkler for 25 minutes instead?

No. We sympathize that some customers may be unable to hand water at this time. The state has made very clear exemptions and hand watering is the only method of watering allowed for established landscapes at this time. The exemptions were created with the goal of allowing some maintenance but limiting the amount of water used and the stress on the resource.

I have a mobile detailing business and I go to local businesses and wash cars. Can I still do this?

This activity has not been banned.

I have a well or want to drill a well. Then can I pressure wash or wash cars whenever I want with no restrictions?

If you have a well drilled for pressure washing or mobile detailing you will not be subject to the restrictions in the Drought Response Plan. In order to qualify for this exemption you need to:

- ◆ Have all vehicles marked with signage "Using Well Water.
- ◆ Every employee must carry a copy of your well receipt.
- ◆ Be subject to onsite chlorine tests if the source is questionable.

I am a pressure washer. When can I operate?

Pressure washing can only be performed by licensed professionals.

Homeowners are not permitted to pressure wash under the current restrictions.

Is Hydroseeding still allowed?

Yes, but the use of fire hydrants is banned for any reason other than public health and safety so a fire hydrant meter is not available for hydroseeding. The company will have to come up with an alternate way to fill their trucks.

If my lawn is treated with (pesticides, fertilizer, weed control) can I water it in?

Yes. You may water in the treatment the next available watering day on the odd even schedule between the hours of Midnight and 10 AM. We do ask if it is a professional applying the chemicals leave a dated flag. Please be advised to limit the fertilization of plants since watering is limited and fertilization increases water needs.

Can I wash my car at home or hold a charity car wash?

No, car washing at home and charity car washes are still banned.

Is aeration and over seeding considered new landscape?

Yes. You must follow the new landscape procedure to receive an official 10 week odd even exemption.

How can I get my garden through the drought?

- Capture the condensation from your air conditioner unit. Some units provide up to 20 gallons of water a day.
- Use a rain barrel to capture rain water.
- Catch the water in your shower as you wait for it to heat up, use it on the plants.
- Save a few gallon jugs. Perforate the bottom with small nail holes. Fill with water you saved indoors or from your AC unit. Place them throughout your garden. It will deliver slow water to the roots.

Can I get a fire hydrant meter to fill my pool or water my landscape?

No. The State Drought Rules prohibit the use of fire hydrants for anything other than public health and safety. This provision starts at drought level 1. The only exception Cobb County allows is at construction sites because dust abatement is a public health issue.