

Non-Essential Water Use Definition for North Carolina Government Agencies and Universities

Drought Condition Actions

A number of non-essential water uses can be identified in any government operation. These uses of water are acceptable during times of normal water availability, as long as proper procedures to maximize efficiency are followed. However, when water is in short supply, non-essential water uses must be curtailed to preserve limited water resources for essential uses. For governmental operations, non-essential water use parameters include those that:

do not have any health or safety impacts,
are not required by regulation,
are not needed to meet the core functions of the agency.

Below is a 'universal' list of potential non-essential water uses. Agency heads should create a specific list for their daily agency functions based on the parameters listed above. This also must follow any local guidelines or ordinances. Checklists and additional guidance information can be found at: www.p2pays.org/water/. Information on current drought conditions can be found at: <http://www.ncdrought.org/>.

General Facility Non-essential Water Uses

General non-essential uses of water that should be considered for curtailment by state agencies in the defined drought area include:

- Washing state vehicles, except as appropriate for health and safety reasons.
- Washing/pressure washing of streets, sidewalks, parking lots and other paved areas or building exteriors (unless necessary for maintaining public sanitation/safety).
- Using hoses for clean up (i.e., do not use hose as a broom), unless required by health code.
- Irrigation of lawns, athletic fields and ornamental plants.
- Operating decorative fountains and pools.
- Running partial loads in washing machines and dishwashers.
- Operating non-essential ice machines.
- Serving tap water at eating establishments unless requested.
- Maintenance of recreational swimming pools (revenue-generating pools exempt).

Upon completion of a list of non-essential water uses, the agency will communicate the requirements to all employees. This should also include contact information for reporting potential additional non-essential uses and a 'rapid response' reporting system to quickly repair leaks and equipment malfunctions. Large agencies with diverse activities at widespread locations may find multiple, but site specific lists more valuable, particularly due to the areas affected by the current drought.