

## WEATHER

# Dry conditions lead to water restrictions

## Residential lawns, golf fairways, parks down to one sprinkling a week across Metro

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VANCOUVER SUN

With more hot weather records expected to be set this weekend, Metro Vancouver has extended water conservation measures for residential lawns and golf courses.

Metro residents will be limited to sprinkling their lawns once a week. Even-numbered residential addresses may sprinkle lawns from 4 a.m. to 9 a.m. on Mondays; odd-numbered addresses can sprinkle from 4 a.m. to 9 a.m. on Thursdays.

Golf courses can water fairways once a week.

Carol Mason, commissioner for Metro Vancouver, said the levels of the reservoirs at Seymour and Capilano are at 79 per cent, which is about where they usually are in early August.

"We have had a very unusually dry and hot May and June," she said Friday at a news conference at Metro Vancouver in Burnaby.

"We are experiencing record dry conditions and the combination of those weather conditions has resulted in a very high demand for water."

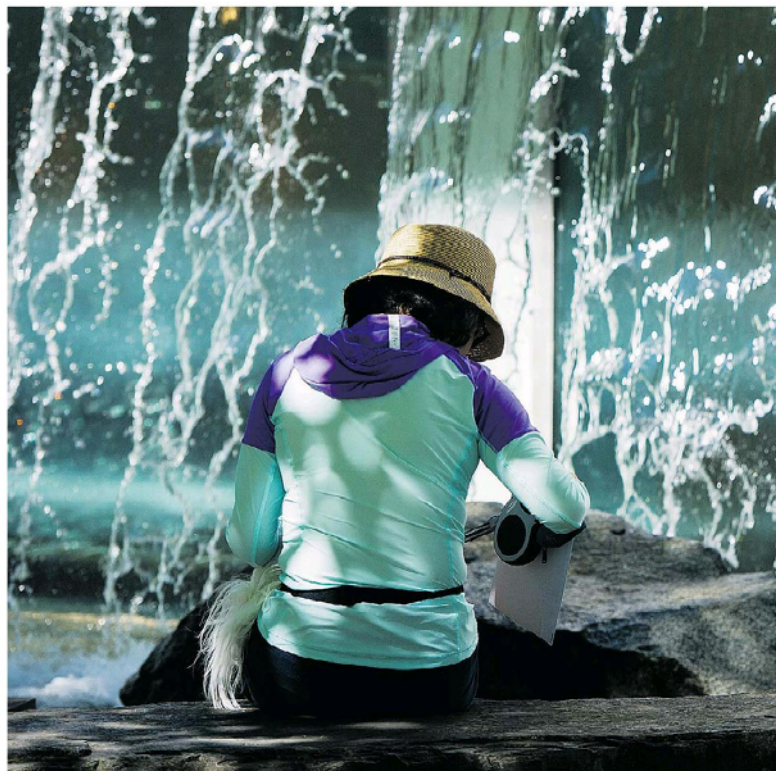
Metro's 23 member municipalities and political bodies are expected to fully implement the tougher water conservation measures by Monday.

Darrell Mussatto, chair of the Metro Vancouver Utilities Commission, asked members of the public to reduce their discretionary use of water.

Healthy lawns, he said, need only an hour a week of water. Not watering them at all means they go dormant and grow back in the fall when the rains return.

"My lawn is brown," he said at the news conference. "I don't water it at all. My car is not crystal clean. It's dirty. I do clean the windshield and licence plates and mirrors so I can operate it safely, but I don't wash my car."

He said as part of conservation measures, Metro Vancouver is launching a water conservation campaign with the slogan Be Water Wise. It's Hot, It's Dry, Don't Waste a Drop.



GERRY KAHRMANN/PNG

All public fountains and water features, like the one in the 1400 block West Hastings, will be shut off.

Enforcement of water use is up to each municipality. In the City of North Vancouver where Mussatto is mayor, he said a bylaw enforcement officer will put a note on the door of anyone seen to be watering outside of the allowed times. If it happens a second time, the homeowner is sent a letter. The third time results in a fine.

Greg Moore, chair of the Metro Vancouver board of directors, said he hopes the public recognizes the need to conserve water because local government officials don't want to go around issuing tickets to people.

He also hopes people can be educated that "there is a real need to conserve water" in the region.

June was the fourth-driest June on record, said Matt MacDonald, meteorologist with Environment Canada. Last month, 11 millimetres of rain fell, compared to a normal June rainfall of 54 mm. The driest on record was in 1951 when 4.6 mm of rain fell.

June was also the second warmest on record, with mean temperatures of 17.9. The record was 1958 at 18 C.

MacDonald said the outlook is for more of the same hot, dry

weather. "This massive ridge of high pressure just doesn't seem to want to budge," he said. "It remains anchored over the Pacific Northwest as far as the eye can see. It's just ongoing dry conditions and warmer than normal."

He expects temperatures to peak Sunday at 28 C by the water and 34 C inland.

A total of 64 weather records were set last weekend and another 10 on Thursday, he said. He expected more records to fall today and Sunday. "I'm sure we'll see another bunch drop this weekend as well," he said.

The dry conditions prompted the provincial government on Friday to declare a level 4 drought rating for Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands, and to close streams and rivers to sport fishing because of low stream flows and warming water temperatures.

At level 4, conditions are "extremely dry," according to the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resources, which means that regional water managers may take additional regulatory actions if they are deemed necessary.

The ban on fishing affects only southern Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands at this time, but the government says biologists are monitoring 75 other key streams and rivers across B.C. and more closures are possible. Lake fishing is not affected by the order.

Low water levels can impede the passage of salmon to spawning grounds, increase their susceptibility to disease, or cause stranding or death due to low oxygen and high water temperatures, according to the ministry.

Other water restrictions in Metro Vancouver:

- All public and commercial fountains and water features are not allowed to operate.
- Unless authorized by a municipality, only water play parks with user-activated on/off switches can be operated.
- Private and commercial washing and power washing of driveways, sidewalks and parkades are only allowed for health and safety reasons. Esthetic reasons are not allowed.
- Sports and sand-based playing fields may use only the minimum level of water needed to keep them in usable condition.
- On non-residential properties, even-numbered addresses can sprinkle lawns with water from 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. on Wednesday; odd-numbered from 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. Tuesday.
- Municipal parks are restricted to watering once a week.

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