

10 WAYS TO PREPARE FOR A DROUGHT-RELATED WATER SHORTAGE

1. Develop a water-shortage response plan with detailed actions for water conservation and, in extreme situations, water curtailment. Drought is another form of drinking water emergency, one you can plan and prepare for.
2. Designate a water-shortage or emergency-response coordinator to ensure effective preparation, communication and technical procedures are in place.
3. Develop a conservation plan and distribute water-conservation information to your customers. Now is the time to develop or update conservation plans, before your well runs dry! It is never too soon to educate customers about wise water use and conservation:
 - a. Establish the need to conserve.
 - b. Define wise water use practices.
 - c. Provide the information customers need to make necessary behavior changes.
4. Check water levels in your wells and other sources at least weekly and keep good records. Look for changes that occur over time, especially a continuing decline in the water level
5. Watch for other indicators of a potential water shortage, including sediments in the water, air in the water when taps are turned on, unusual water quality problems, and increased customer complaints. Be particularly attentive to excessive usage by customers.
6. Identify an alternative water supply (water tanker truck, bottled water, intertie to another system) and, if possible, establish intertie agreements for use in case of supply disruption.
7. Have emergency sources tested. If you have an existing emergency or backup source, get it tested now for coliform and nitrates so it is ready to go online if there is a water shortage.
8. Find leaks and repair them. Leaky water pipes can waste large amounts of water. Reducing water loss through leak detection should be a priority for every water system with more than 20 percent unaccounted-for water, even more so when faced with drought or other potential limits on supply.
9. Technical assistance and funding are available to help water systems in a supply emergency. Contact your **Rural Community Assistance Partnership regional partner** or your state primacy agency for additional information.
10. Be prepared to issue a health advisory. A service interruption caused by a water shortage (mechanical or drought) not only affects water quality but also has the potential to create a water-quality problem. Health advisories are issued when the water system, in coordination with state or local health officials, believe there is a drinking water health risk. Advisories usually take the form of a drinking water warning or boil water order.