

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Why am I being told I must reduce water usage by 36%?

A: In April, Governor Jerry Brown issued an Executive Order calling for a 25% reduction in water usage compared to 2013 usage levels. The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) then used a formula to calculate water districts' average residential water use per capita, per day to compare nearly every water district in the State. Districts that used more water per person received higher reduction requirements. Based on residents' use of water, Valley Water Company is in the highest reduction tier and is required to reduce consumption by 36% measured against 2013 usage levels. The reduction requirement is mandated by the State, not Valley Water Company.

Q: Why was Valley Water Company put into the highest 36% tier?

A: Water usage in the Valley Water Service area is greater than in other areas due to our semi-rural makeup, larger lots and lack of density. The State used District's residential gallons per capita per day to calculate water reduction requirements. Because of the Valley Water service area makeup, residential gallons per capita per day are higher than in other areas, landing us in the highest 36% reduction tier.

Q: I have heard there may be a penalty assessed for not conserving water, what does that mean?

A: In July or August of this year (2015) the SWRCB MAY levy fines against water districts for not meeting conservation requirements established by the SWRCB. When Governor Brown issued his Executive Order in April calling for a 25% reduction in potable water use statewide, he included a provision that allows the SWRCB to fine water districts up to \$10,000 per day for not complying with reduction requirements. It remains to be seen if the fines will be levied, but we are preparing for the worst should it happen. If fines are levied, they will be passed along to ratepayers using more than 35 units (one unit is equal to 748.10 gallons) of water. An additional \$4.597 will be charged for every unit over 35 units of consumption.

Q: I heard that rates have gone up recently for water and could go even higher? Why did that happen and how much will my bill go up?

A: As a result of this unprecedented mandatory 36% water conservation requirement and the potential for heavy fines for not meeting reduction requirements, we are taking measures to prepare for this impact. Like many water agencies throughout California, our rates must be

adjusted to reflect the reality of this State mandate.

Q: My water bill discusses water usage in terms of units. What is a unit?

A: One unit is equal to 748.10 gallons of water.

Q: I have heard I can only water twice a week, which days am I limited to?

A: The State is recommending outdoor watering be limited to two days per week to meet conservation requirements. Some water districts have dictated which days those are in their service area. While Valley Water Company has adopted the two-day a week mandate for outdoor irrigation, Valley Water Company has not assigned specific watering days and is leaving that to customer discretion.

Q: I have heard there are rebates available for grass replacement and other water conservation products. Does Valley Water pay out those rebates? And how do I apply for them?

A: All rebate applications should be submitted through socalwatersmart.com. At socalwatersmart.com, customers can also browse all the rebates available and the criteria for submission. Rebates are then processed through the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Valley Water Company does not process rebates.

Q: I have heard of some places banning the filling of pools, what is the rule here?

A: Valley Water has not adopted a ban on refilling swimming pools. You are allowed to fill a new pool or refill your current pool as a part of regular maintenance or repair. However, there are businesses that will empty, store, and refill your pool using the same water. Valley Water Company does not endorse any specific company and customers would need to research this option independently.

Q: I spent a lot of money on my landscaping, are you telling me I have to kill it and waste that money?

A: It depends. Many landscapes can tolerate irrigation reductions to twice per week. The yard will not be as green, but it will survive through the drought.

One of the largest consumers of water is grass. Allowing your grass to go brown can have a big impact on your water reduction. Alternatively, you can completely replace your grass. There are rebates available for replacing turf with drought tolerant materials or synthetic turf. Visit socalwatersmart.com for more information on rebates available to help offset the cost of any landscape alterations.

We do encourage that you consider using drought tolerant plants going forward to help mitigate against this and future droughts. Droughts are a natural cycle in our climate, and they should be expected to return in the future.

Q: I feel like I have done all I can to cut back, what more can I possibly do?

A: considered. We also have materials available in our office (4524 Hampton Road, La Cañada Flintridge). Every little bit counts, but outdoor water use is the biggest part of our water use in the Valley Water service area, so anything you can do to further reduce water use outside is going to have the most significant impact.

Q: How do I know if I am conserving enough?

A: Visit www.valleywatercompany.com and log into the online billing portal. There you can view your account's historic usage data and determine if you are cutting back enough. Remember, conservation is measured against 2013 consumption levels so make sure you are comparing to your 2013 usage information.

Q: Aren't we under a mandate to irrigate our slopes to mitigate fire and landslide risk?

A: We certainly understand concern over fire and landslide risk and would not ask any resident to put their property at risk. Residents are encouraged to do research on defensible space to keep your property protected from fire (http://www.readyforwildfire.org/defensible_space). There are also several plants that are drought tolerant and fire resistant. Residents should consider planting these when making updates to their landscape (http://www.readyforwildfire.org/landscape_ideas).

Q: I came home and found a door hanger on my front door or gate. Why did I get that?

A: Our field staff has been asked to leave door hangers at homes not meeting the required 36% reduction in water use (measured against 2013 usage levels). The door hangers are a reminder to conserve and meet the 36% reduction requirement set by the State.

Q: I see a business or house in the area that is wasting water. Who do I report this to?

A: Customers can report water waste in the Valley Water service area to our office at (818) 790-5516.

Q: I have protected trees on my property that I need to maintain and need to keep watering. How can I save water yet save my trees, too?

A: The State recognizes that although conservation is important, we do not want to kill trees in the process. The City of La Cañada Flintridge has posted several articles on tree care in a drought and they can be viewed [here](#) and [here](#).